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NZ TODAY RV Lifestyle

VOL. 21
MARCH-APRIL
2023

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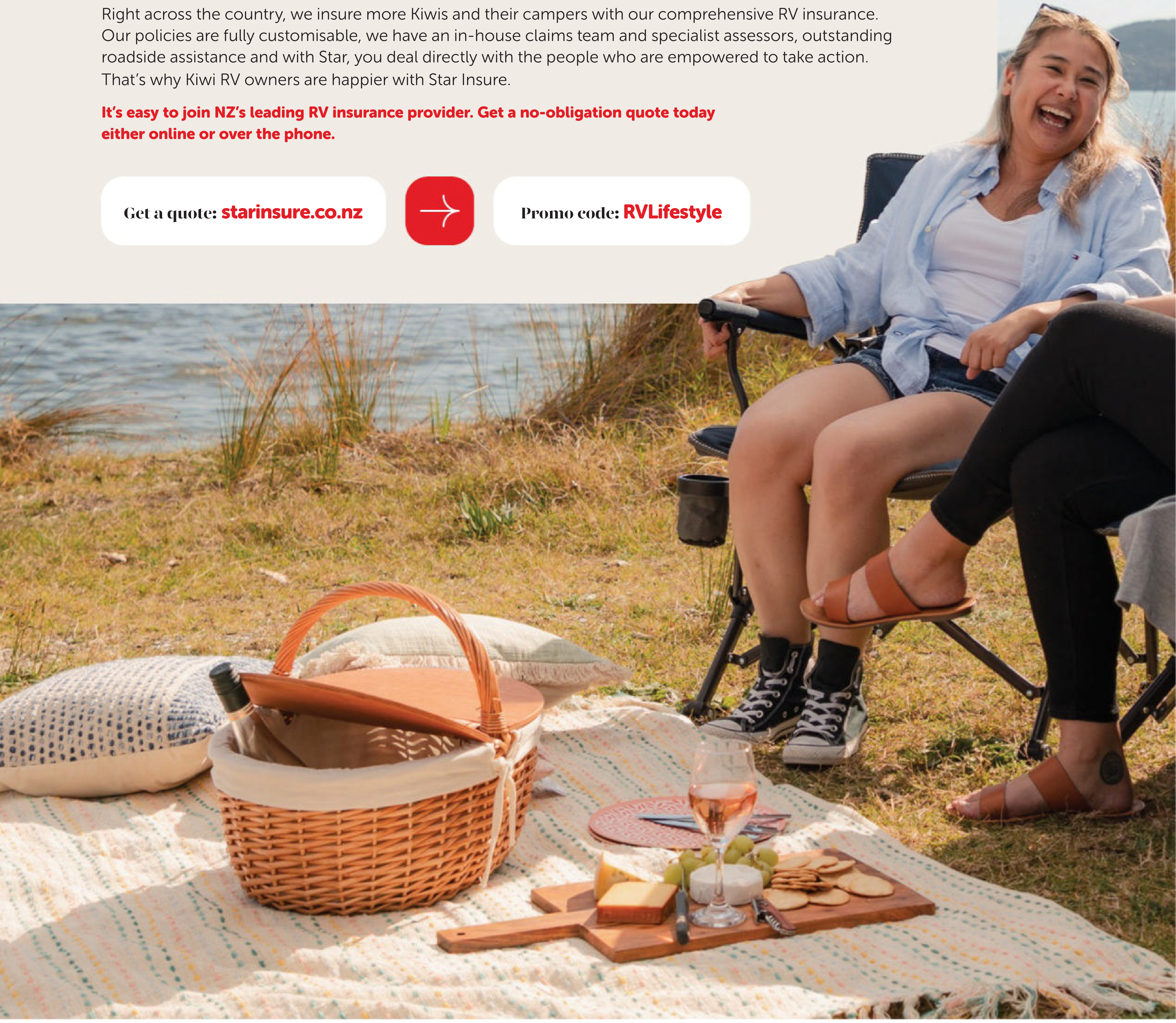

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MEGA BOOKS TO BE WON

from p56

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Water, water, everywhere, but not a drop to drink

What a start to the 2023 year it has been across New Zealand, while the South Island bathed in sunshine enjoying a gorgeous summer the North Island was battered and washed away in many parts. Many homes and lives have been lost.

There is so much to say and feel about what happened in West Auckland, East Cape and the Hawke's Bay, but how to express it, and the magnitude of what we are collectively feeling, is difficult.

I want to acknowledge here the confirmed victims of Cyclone Gabrielle on the day I write this: Marie Greene, George Luke, John Coates, Brendan Miller, two-year-old Ivy Collins, Shona Wilson, Susane Caccioppoli, Dave van Zwanenberg VFF, Craig Stevens VFF, and the two souls whose identitification is being worked on. I know Kiwis are sharing the pain of these losses, disbelieving as to the speed of floods, the complete destruction of buildings, vehicles, bridges, and trees we have seen on video footage, so confronting. Hearing of wee Ivy being swept off her mama's shoulders just overwhelms me with tears when I think of it, and I know I'm not alone with these feelings. The terror of trying to kick your ceiling in to get into the cavity, then breaking through to get onto your roof to save yourself and family; of driving your vehicle across a flooded bridge not knowing part of it had washed away; those in their homes taken by landslides or simply swept away – such a nightmare situation for thousands of people, and tragic for those mentioned. Our love, sympathy and deepest regrets to all those who have lost family and friends. I see many families have GiveALittle fundraising pages; if every reader of this magazine gave just $1 to each of them that would be an amazing contribution – pennies add up to pounds as us oldies say.

I also want to acknowledge our Volunteer Fire Brigade members around the country, and the paid FENZ members. I have spoken in previous times about the invaluable contribution our volunteer fire fighter responders make in our small community, always the first faces you see in an emergency; be it fire, accident or health incident, one of our local volunteers will be right there. Thank you, and our sympathy on losing two of our family in Muriwai with Dave and Craig being cruelly taken while on duty for their community.

The best in people has certainly come out, as it has to in these situations. Watching disasters unfold on TV over recent years has shown it takes three days to get through the first stage of the event happening when helping yourself and your fellow neighbours is your first survival point. By five days there are major boots on the ground, and outside aid starts flowing through. New Zealand has done pretty well by having the Civil Defence in place, the army ready to go, knowing the cyclone was coming and tracking it, especially after the cyclone two weeks earlier and the devastating flooding that it caused in West Auckland. Civil Defence volunteers leapt into action around the North Island and people were warned of the potential for floods, though nobody could foresee this result that is for sure.

Recognition to the NZ Police, NZ Defence force and Civil Defence people on the ground, outstanding work in such a widespread event. As we have been watching all the coverage of the floods and aftermath it was also heartening to see that pets and animals weren't forgotten. Acknowledgement and thanks to the SPCA and HUHA from Wellington who immediately got to work with local volunteers to set up a refuge for animals to be taken to, a safe environment to bring animals to when owners couldn't look after them as they had no home themselves. Caspar was super happy to see this happening – read his column. Seeing owners being reconnected with pets they thought were gone has been emotional and we thank everyone who has been involved, all those around the country that organised dried food donations, beds and more for these pets.

Take care out there, be kind to each other.

Robyn, Bruce and Caspar Mountain
Editor – Publisher – Sidekick RV Lifestyle dog

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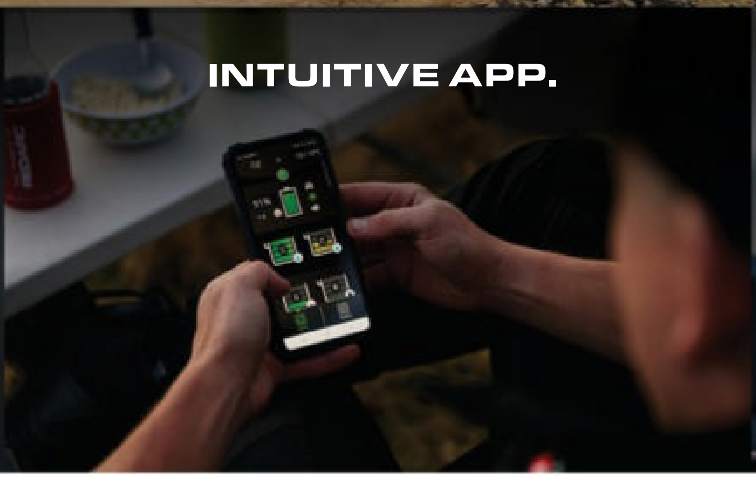
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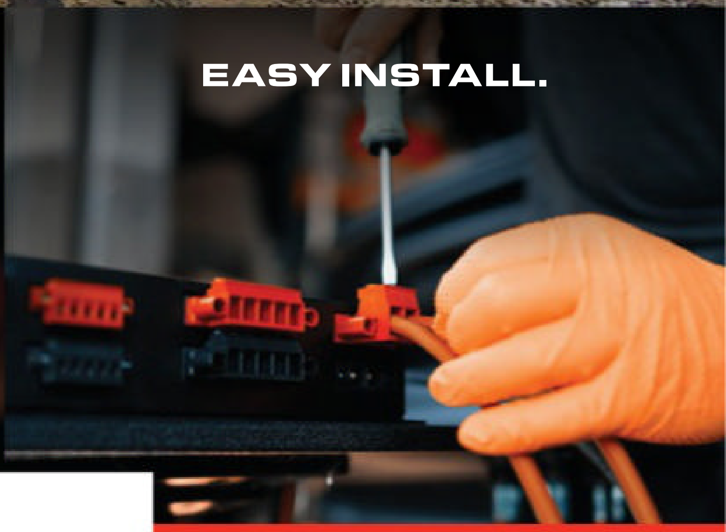
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Hi Robyn,

I am writing to thank you for the book *Guardians of Aotearoa* which arrived yesterday, Friday. It came as a surprise when I opened it that I had actually won it. I am looking forward to sitting down and reading the stories of these inspiring people.

Once again thank you for this fabulous book. By the way, I really enjoy reading your magazine and learning about the places I am unaware of and adding them to our bucket list, especially when we tour the South Island. I look forward to the next edition.

Warm regards,

Richard Passey

ED: We do love giving things away Richard, reading is the gift of relaxation, which we love to share, keep entering each issue.

Good morning NZTODAY RV Lifestyle

We look forward to receiving your magazine and refer to it often when travelling around the country in our Swift Abbey 470. (My husband Gary is a ham radio operator so it is less a caravan and more a radio shack on wheels.) We have enjoyed reading Allan Dick's recent articles about the Maniototo. Gary's great-grandfather, Sidney Walter Lodge, surveyor, bank manager, gold miner and landowner had a homestead allotment in Kokonga. He was also involved in railway construction as shown by attached photo of his notebook. During the summer his children attended Hyde school – at the 'diggings'. During the harsh winters they lived in Dunedin with their grandparents and attended Arthur St School – NZ Society of Genealogists School Records. In the summer of 2000 with our school-age children and our trusty long-wheel-based Landcruiser we did the Great South Island Cemetery Tour. We had done the Great North Island Cemetery Tour the previous summer. Our South Island journey took us to lonely cemeteries in Lawrence, old brewery sites in Dunedin, gold-mining claims on the banks of the Molyneaux River, the Dunstan Trail, Serpentine Track and Waipiata.

We look forward to reading about more of Allan, Audrey and Audrey's mum's adventures. Regards. Carol Lodge

Pics books

ED: Thanks from myself, and from Allan and family, they do appreciate the feedback from readers.

Dear Robyn,

I'm sitting at Magoo's in Christchurch City while a new muffler is fitted on my car. I've just read your 'Letter To Readers' in the RV magazine Jan-Feb 2020.

You wrote a beautiful, caring letter. So good that you talked about mental health. Hope you are still the Editor!

Bless you,

Catherine.

ED: I was chuffed to receive this from Catherine. We give up to 3650 copies of the magazine to MTA owners all across New Zealand, I appreciate that people are reading them in the waiting room years later and the content is still relevant. Here is the 'Mental Health' piece from that article, it is a great reminder for today and going forward with all that has happened.

Mental Health

Don't forget this is the time of year with the most violence in homes because of the stress it can bring financially. Who can you help out today as you read this? Open your eyes and your ears to the people around you who may be struggling mentally on some level. Remember you can just say simple words like "are you okay, can I sit and talk with you?" – anything to extend a hand at the right time. That grumpy withdrawn uncle, aunty, grandson, son, daughter – whomever – that sits in a corner withdrawn from others; maybe they're not just a waster, ignorant bugger or however you may criticise them to yourself or others. Maybe they're struggling with feelings of despair, not fitting in, mentally beating themselves up all the time behind the façade they present to the world. Maybe you are that person. Maybe you struggle to open your mouth and verbalise the words to another person, "I need help, I am struggling, I can't cope," or do anything to reach out for help. I encourage you to try, and I hope they have open ears and hearts and actually listen to your cry for help, not just put their own judgements, pressures of the day or 'harden up' attitude on you. Keep trying. The mental health system is getting better, talk to your Doctor first and regularly, at the least. Enough said.

Dear Allan Dick

And how are you going? I am Neville Booth formerly from dear old Dunedin. I have been residing in Australia since the Beatles came into fashion, then Creedence Clearwater Revival came into vogue – still like the voice of John Fogarty, he's the best.

I am over visiting my sister and she handed me a few NZTODAY mags, and reading your article makes me remember the name Pagonis and the beau monde cars in Princess Street, where we gathered on the Friday night.

I see you spent a great deal of your youth at Brighton and then Auckland, and Auckland has now been hit with a tropical storm, so for some reason times have changed, and that's the reason I just wanted you to know how much I've enjoyed going back to those years of our youth, Allan.

My sisters and brother would not miss Joe Brown's Town Hall dance, and if they could not get there, we listened to it on the radio, so we all learnt to waltz in the kitchen.

Also, there was a Miss Wallace who gave my oldest sister dancing lessons.

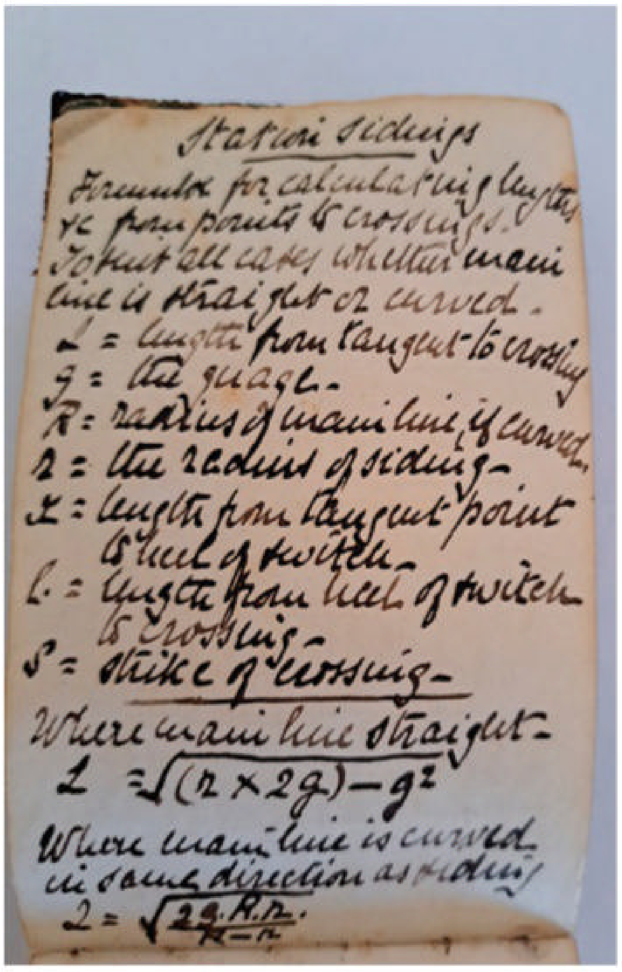
My car is about 60 years old now and has had rego all that time – yes, it's nice, a red two-door Triumph Herald coupé.

I also hear you went to live in Oamaru. Well, I hope you and your wife and family are OK.

Many Thanks

Neville Booth

ED: Thanks Neville I have passed your email to Allan.



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Where main line straight.
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Where main line is curved in same direction as siding
$L = \sqrt{\frac{2g.R.r}{R-r}}$

The Viking Festival, Norsewood

Norsewood is a small rural settlement just off SH2, 20km northeast of Dannevirke and 34km from Waipukurau. It was founded by mostly Norwegian settlers in 1872, and today is known as a Heritage Village retaining a real Scandinavian flavour. The village consists of Upper Norsewood and Lower Norsewood and though it has a population of only 1600, you can easily fill up a day or two here.

In Lower Norsewood you will find the NZ Natural Clothing factory selling all sorts of knitted possum–merino garments and socks, many in Norwegian designs. If you show your NZMC membership card you will get a free pair of bed socks and 10 per cent off your purchases! Next to the factory shop is a blacksmith who makes and sells superb handcrafted knives and jewellery – his stall was very popular at the Viking Festival. Just around the corner from the blacksmith is the Wopwops Wetland, where you can have a leisurely walk through the native plantings and then feed the eels.

Across the road from the NZ Natural Clothing factory is the Old Dairy Factory, which has been converted to a recording studio and concert venue, and if you time your visit right you can take in a musical concert or happening held there once a month. Previously when we were there, we attended an outdoor showing of two silent movies under the stars with a percussionist from the NZSO providing the sound effects. This time it was an afternoon jazz concert. Follow the Old Dairy Factory on Facebook to find out what concerts are coming up.

A walk around Johanna's World is worth a visit, where authentic Norwegian buildings, including a stave church, have been erected. And if you see three carved wooden trolls, they are marking the way to the local pioneer museum, housed in an 1888 cottage. Even a walk through the local cemetery and reading all the Scandinavian names can be a very interesting way to spend an hour or so.

On this visit, we were there to attend the two-day Annual Viking Festival, held over Waitangi weekend. It is a family-friendly festival where Viking life and customs play a major part, and what a great venue to experience this. The first Viking Festival was held in 2019 and since then it has steadily grown.

The Wopwops Wetland Park Gateway (Waharoa)

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(This year, 4000 visited on Saturday and 2000 on the Sunday.) There is ample parking in fields adjacent to all the action (Matthews Park) for just $5 per person per night.

Entry to the festival was just $5 per adult, per day. Children under 10 were free!

We were entertained with horse-riding skills, hand-to-hand combat, spear and axe throwing, archery, blacksmithing, knife making and even a Viking wedding ceremony! Many of those participating brought their families and accommodated them in specially built Viking tents for the weekend. There were competitions for the best costumes, best Viking stall and Viking tent. I must say that the tents looked very comfortable with warm sheepskins, furs and wooden platform beds.

The stalls were of a high quality and mostly different to what you'd find at a normal festival. There were hand-made knives, swords, hatchets, leather bags, leather woven jewellery, helmets, leather waistcoats, in fact, a great array of accessories to add to your Viking costume. So many people enjoyed getting dressed up in Viking costume, including the very young.

The Viking Festival in Norsewood is a unique event and well worth putting on your calendar for Waitangi weekend 2024.

From Carol Wischnowsky

ED: Thanks so much for sharing your visit and experience with readers, we appreciate it greatly.

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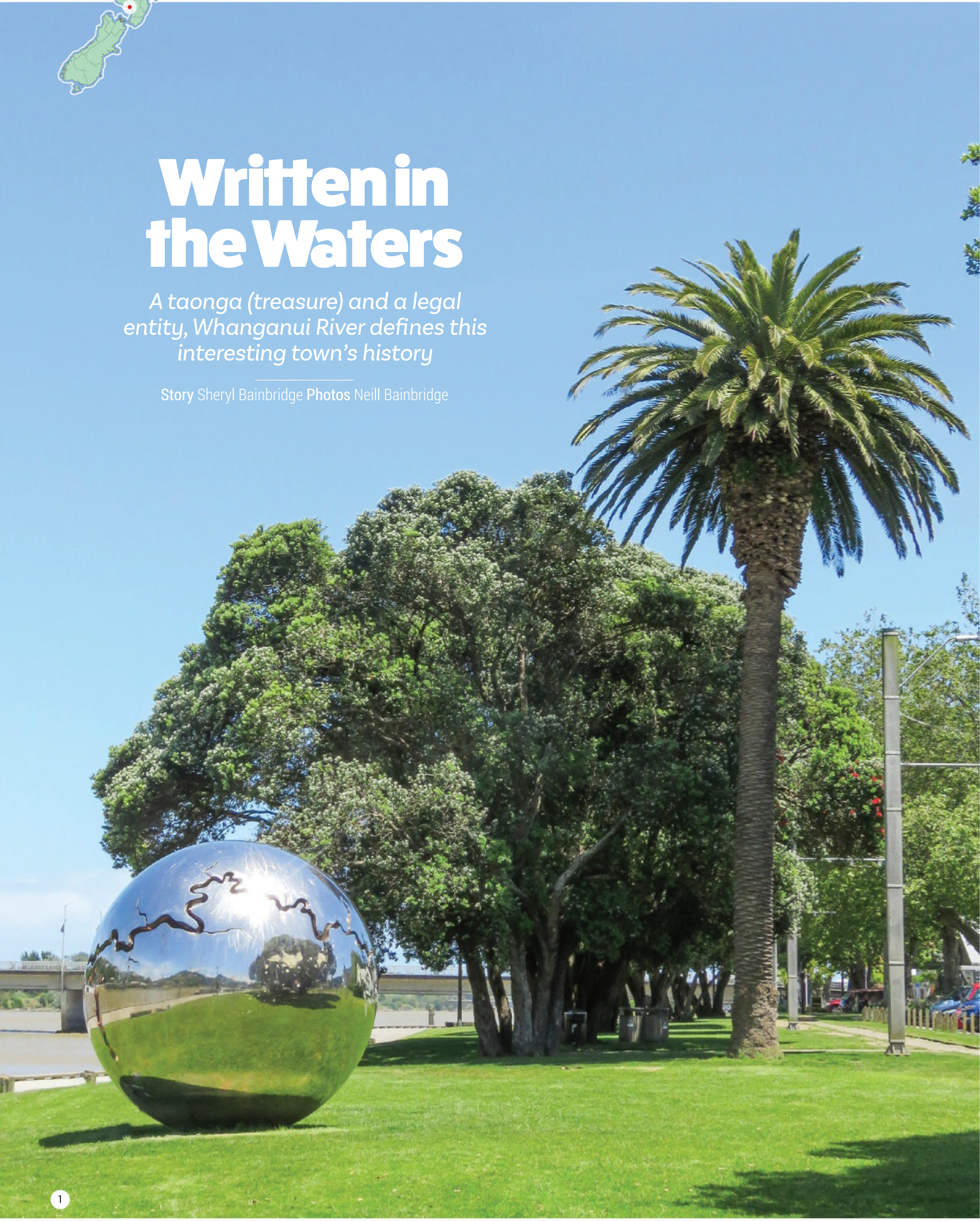
Written in the Waters

A taonga (treasure) and a legal entity, Whanganui River defines this interesting town's history

Story Sheryl Bainbridge **Photos** Neill Bainbridge



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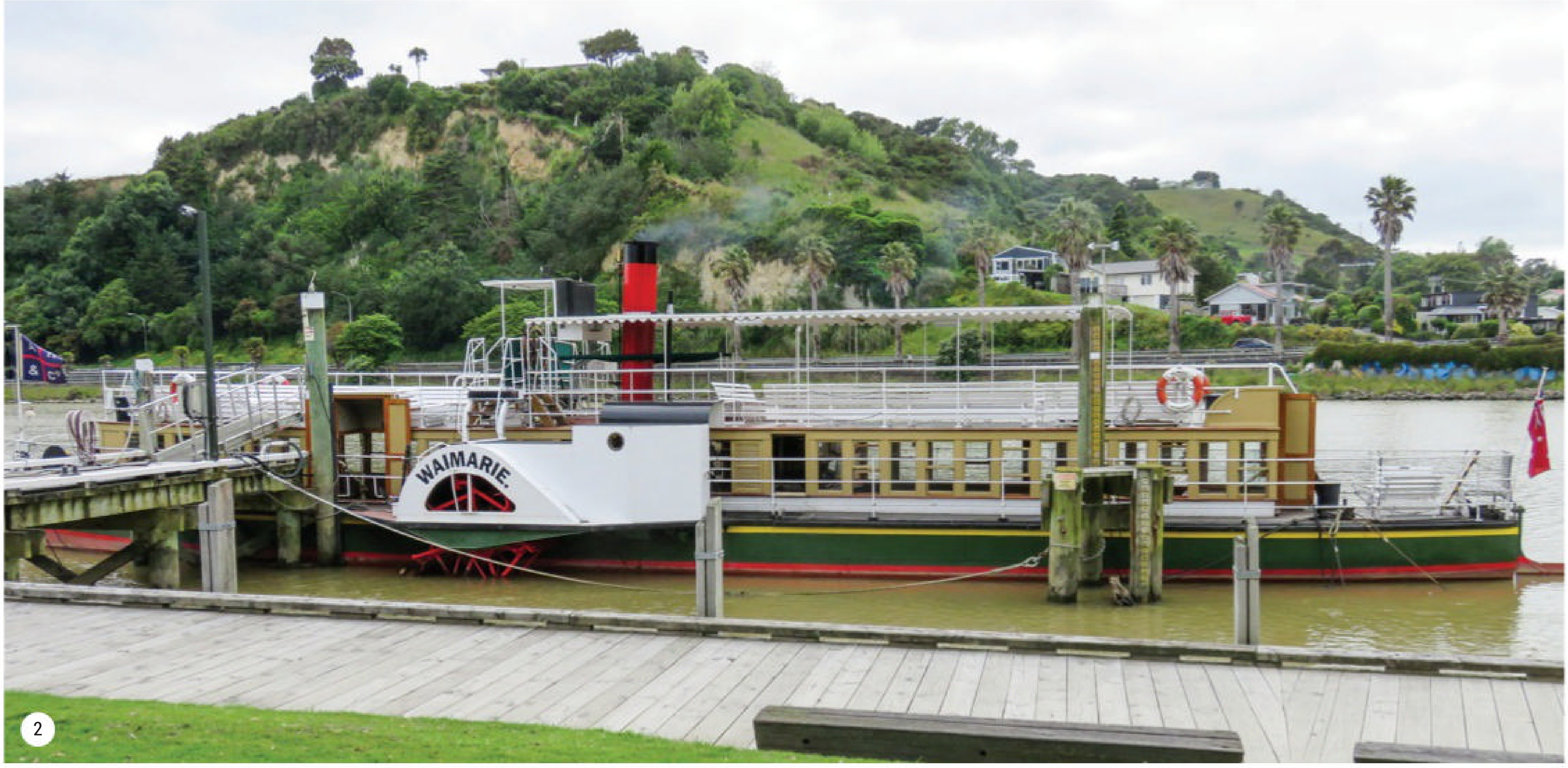

Wanganui/Whanganui? Both names are prominent on commercial and other public buildings in the town of almost 50,000 people. However, in 2009 the name of the Whanganui River was changed by the government to correctly reflect its Māori spelling, and in 2015 the name of the district was corrected to Whanganui by Minister Hon. Louise Upston.

Since the first days of human habitation the 290km Whanganui River has played such an important part in the lives of both Māori and European as taonga (treasure) that it has formally been granted status with the rights of a legal person. From its source on Mt Tongariro to the Tasman Sea, it has been a vital communication link and a trade route to the central North Island. In 1892 Alexander Hatrick began a steamboat service to connect with coach- then rail services at Taumarunui, and this trip we find ourselves boarding New Zealand's only authentic coal-fired paddle steamer.

The *Waimarie*, which operated back in the day, was salvaged from its watery grave of many years, restored, relaunched, and now conducts two-hour cruises on the Whanganui River. Bookings can be made online or at the historic (1881) riverside office that also includes a small but very interesting maritime museum. Boarding takes place on the riverside at the rear of the building, and after a brief karakia (prayer) and safety briefing, we steam upriver to Upokongaro, approximately one hour from town. During the journey we gain a unique perspective on points of interest including the three towers that dominate Whanganui's skyline.

All prominent landmarks, the Durie Hill elevator tower, the adjacent war memorial tower and the city water tower stand out against the skyline from the river, and all warrant a closer look. The elevator tower, which connects to an underground tunnel, was originally a means of transporting people to and from their hilltop homes but is now a tourist attraction. The scale of the tall slender war memorial is best seen from its site on Durie Hill, as is the 1927 water tower.

As part of the on-board commentary, we learn that about 100 years ago, a Mr Boyd established a zoo near the river at the suburb of Aramoho. At the time it was not unusual to see a bear wandering down to the river for a morning drink, but in time, complaints about noise, especially the lions roaring at night, led to the closure of the zoo, which relocated to Auckland, becoming the beginning of today's Auckland Zoo. Two homing pigeons accompany us on our trip, and passengers can write messages which are attached to a capsule on each of the birds' legs. The birds are released

1. The reflective ball sculpture
2. Paddle steamer *Waimarie*
3. Stoke her up! *Waimarie*'s firebox

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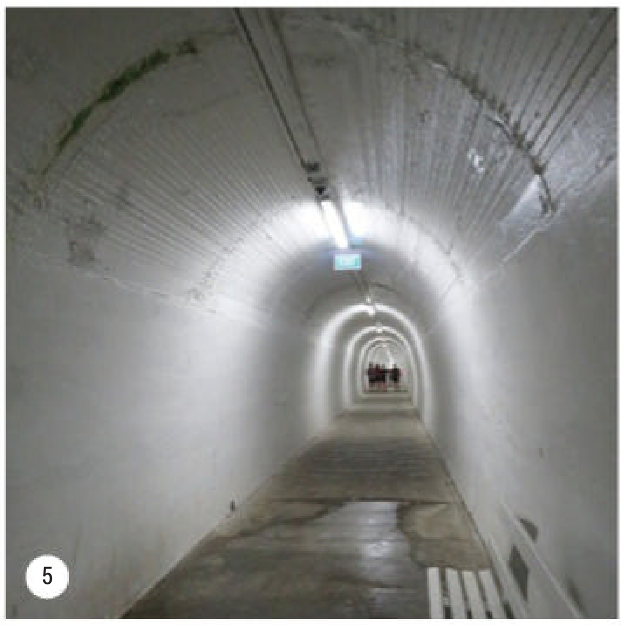
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upriver and fly home to base, arriving well before we do. Our trip was on my grandson's birthday, so I was lucky enough to send him a message that had been on a unique journey.

After passing beneath road bridges and a rail bridge we arrive at the graceful cycle and pedestrian bridge. Opened in December 2020 it gives access from State Highway 4 to Whanganui's outer suburbs. Apparently, it was built on the western side of the river and manoeuvred across to reach the SH4 side using a clever method involving a series of pontoons.

About an hour after leaving, we arrive at Upokongaro where we see that the MV *Wairua*, another historic vessel, is berthed. A tall church spire peeps out from behind the trees. While not easily seen from the river, St Mary's Anglican Church can be clearly seen from State Highway 4. Built in 1877, it's the oldest church on its original site in the Whanganui district and is notable for its three-sided spire and beautiful roses. Nearby the Avoca Hotel's unusual frontage gives the building its own charm.

Just off SH4 the Whanganui River Road leads to Jerusalem, 66km away, and then a further 11km to the small settlement of Pipiriki from where jet-boat tours to the renowned Bridge to Nowhere leave. Some years ago, poet James K Baxter set up a commune at Jerusalem, but the community is more famous for its Catholic heritage, largely due to Mother Mary Joseph Aubert. It's understood that Mother Mary Joseph, whose good works had a phenomenally great impact on community members, will shortly be canonised as New Zealand's first Catholic saint.

Some years ago, we travelled to Pipiriki from Raetihi, at which time the road was terrible. However, although narrow, the road has now been sealed from both the Raetihi and Whanganui ends and is much more easily navigable. St Joseph's church at Jerusalem is

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a treasure, and the valley itself is lovely. Forgotten World Adventures tours operate out of Taumarunui, and their 'Epic' and 'Rhine of the Pacific' tours would be wonderful ways of seeing this area without having to self-drive.

In 2014 Whanganui made headlines for all the wrong reasons when negative growth saw it dubbed a 'zombie town'. But eight years later that's all changed, and there's a new vitality about the place. As Paul Chaplow – Strategic Lead, Visitor Industries of Whanganui & Partners, the town's economic development agency – says, Whanganui has had a significant growth trend since 2014.

Paul points out that Whanganui's population currently sits at 48,700. "In 2022, Whanganui recorded population growth of +0.6 per cent while national growth was +0.2 per cent. Most of that growth was due to internal migration as international borders remained closed. Whanganui's growth in 2021 was +1.0 per cent and in 2020 it was +1.5 per cent, and a significant portion of its newcomers were internationals," he says, adding that "Whanganui is a creative and beautiful place, which makes it hugely popular with visitors. There is a real sense of being able to have an authentic experience and being welcomed by locals keen to share all their top tips and favourite spots. The city is accessible by air and road, and is easy to get around. There are loads of fun activities for families, for nature enthusiasts and for art lovers. The city is rich with creativity and one-of-a-kind experiences. With the river at its heart, the

4-5. War memorial elevator tower and Historic elevator tunnel
6. About to pass under the cycle/pedestrian bridge
7. The water tower
8. A closer look at St Mary's Anglican Church on SH4. The grounds contain some wonderful old roses

Explore the bush or take in the city
WHANGANUI
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creative history and contemporary design which define Whanganui bring life to the city, its people and to visitors. Whanganui has endless galleries and street art. The city boasts exceptional restaurants and cafés, boutique shopping, a renowned riverside market, beautiful wildlife and opportunities for adventure. Whanganui is ideal for visitors who want to relax, for those who want a unique experience, and for others seeking for extraordinary adventures."

Paul goes on to confirm that in 2017, Te Awa Tupua legislation recognised Whanganui River at law as deserving of the rights and protection afforded a living person. The Act recognises Te Awa Tupua as an indivisible and living whole comprising the Whanganui River from the mountains to the sea, with all its tributaries, physical and metaphysical elements. This extraordinary legislation sets Whanganui apart and is of great interest to national and international visitors. This unique legislation reflects the unique ancestral relationship Whanganui iwi have with the river. Iwi have lived alongside the river for generations, and they hold a deep spiritual connection with Te Awa Tupua. To hapū and iwi, the river is a living being inseparable from the people who live alongside it.

He concluded by saying, "In 2021 Whanganui was recognised by UNESCO as a City of Design, joining its international Creative Cities Network. UNESCO's recognition of Whanganui's creative heritage reflects the unique significance of the region's indigenous cultural identity. Whanganui's creative history and contemporary design bring life to the city and its inhabitants and are accessible to explore every day. The City of Design status celebrates the visionary contributions of preceding generations who helped shape Whanganui, and it reflects centuries of contribution by Whanganui's creative communities."

Certainly, the sculptures on the riverside are impressive, and include a Paul Dibble kererū, a huge stainless-steel ball and a trio of HB pencils. From Awanui to Bluff, street art has taken off as a way to enliven the walls of buildings and Whanganui is no exception. This country has a remarkable amount of exceptional talent. Statues and sculptures are prominent at Pākaitore/Moutoa Gardens and in many of Whanganui's parks. Extending the vintage tram tracks into the town centre may also add to its future vibrancy. At present, a short vintage tram ride along the waterfront from its depot is an attraction, and on reaching the end of the ride, a larger and as yet unrenovated tram can be seen. It was a prop in the Peter Jackson movie King Kong, and there are hopes that it will be restored eventually.

On fine evenings, keen fishermen congregate at the river mouth in the hope of landing dinner, but there are many dining options for the non-hunter-gatherers among us. Directly opposite the (again historic) Opera House, the Brick House provides a good meal and a little bit of a mystery. Beside the reception area a pair of trapdoors are set into the floor. While they're now used to house the filtration plant for the goldfish tank, their original purpose seems to be lost in the mists of time. The building was opened as the Whanganui Commercial Club in 1907 with that familiar name 'A Hatrick' as president, but it doesn't really give much idea as to why a trapdoor was required.

Accommodation options are plentiful too. We chose to stay a short distance from town at the Whanganui River Top 10 Holiday Park, where a regatta meant that both the park and the river were pumping as students skimmed up and downstream in their craft. But our small self-contained cabin was perfectly located on a tranquil, riverside site.

All in all, Whanganui has a whole lot going for it, with its culture, history, art, and glassworks, complemented by some very beautiful beaches further along the coast. We had a timeframe to meet but left town knowing that for the next trip there's more to explore.

9. HB pencils with the water tower in the background
10. Statue at Moutoa Gardens
11. Whanganui Opera House

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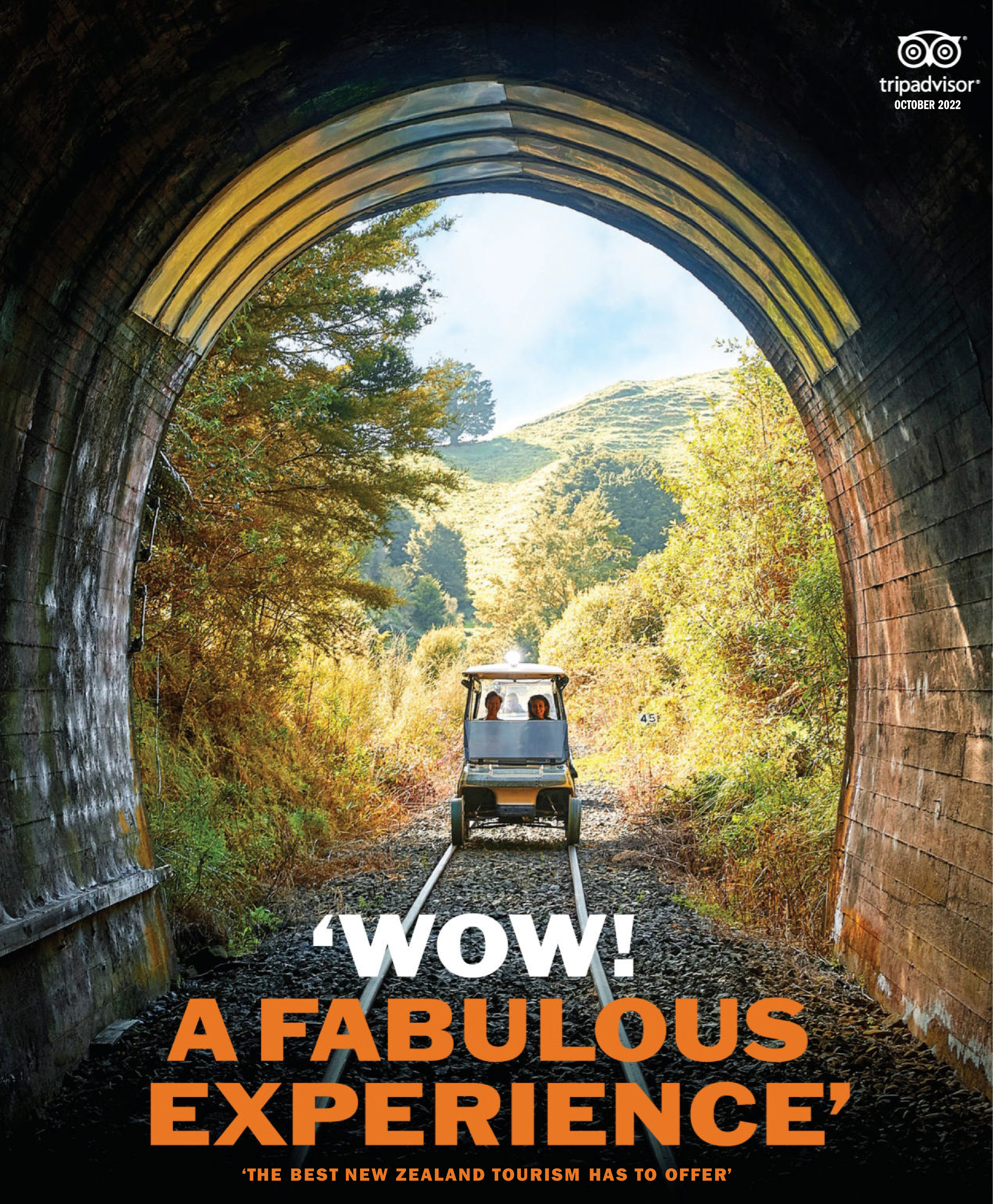

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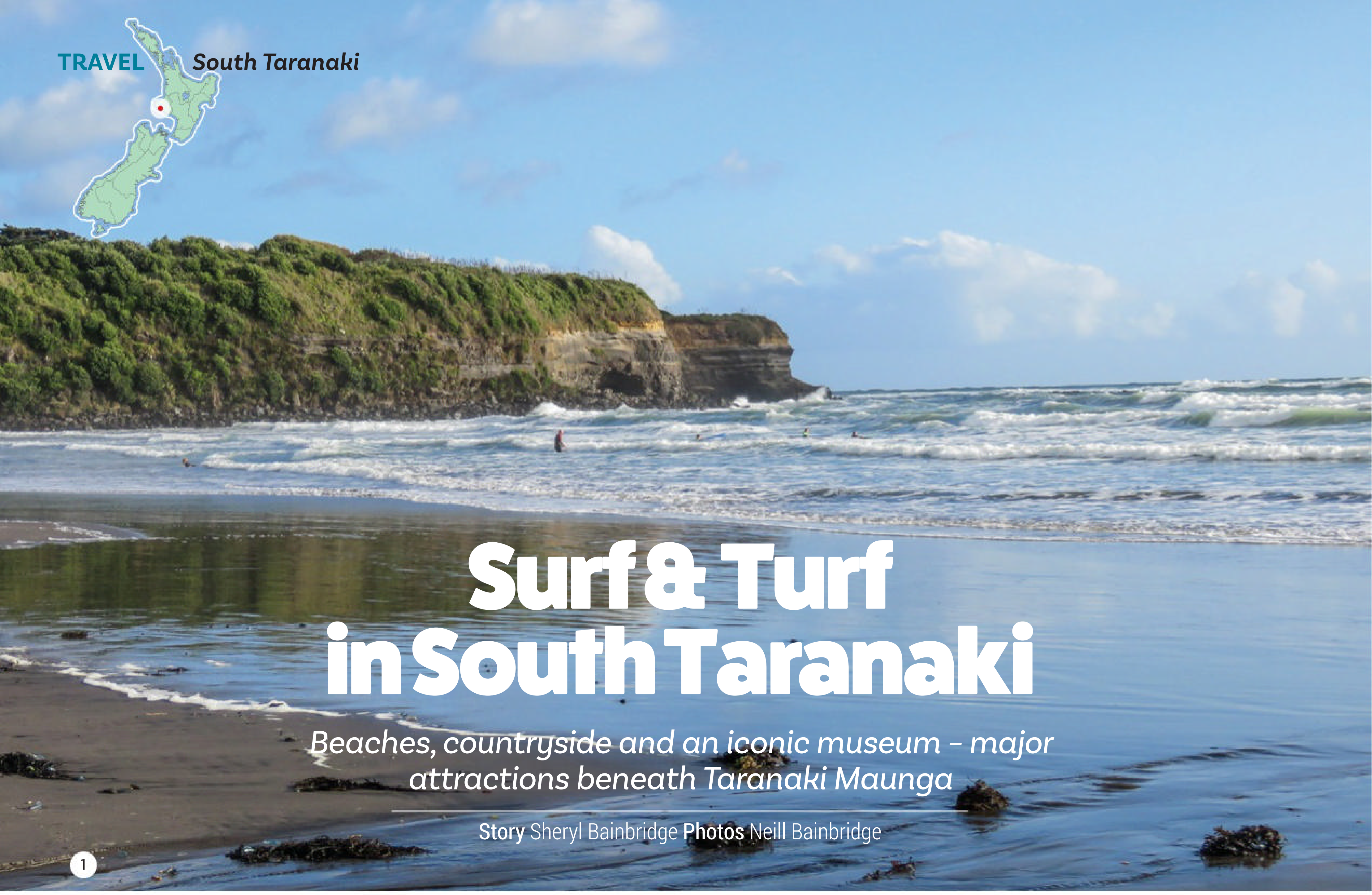
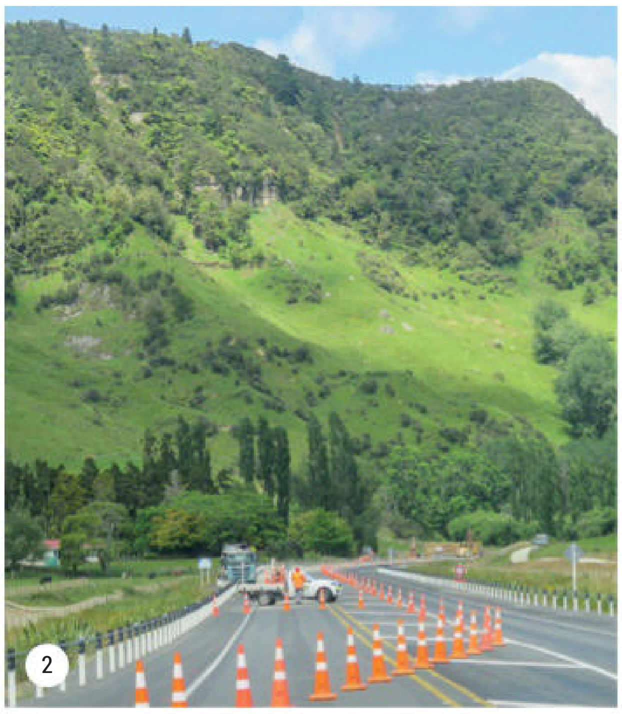


Surf & Turf in South Taranaki

Beaches, countryside and an iconic museum – major attractions beneath Taranaki Maunga

Story Sheryl Bainbridge **Photos** Neill Bainbridge



1. Ōpunake Beach
2. The first lot of roadworks
3. Equipment being used at Mt Messenger

Generally, the drive from Piopio to Eltham takes about 2.5 hours, but this trip began a further 1.5 hours away in Hamilton, and a huge number of road works, including the significant developments at Mt Messenger, added almost another hour to the journey. It'll be a great drive when the work's done, but in the meantime it's a bit irksome. However, we reached our destination, Eltham's Fonterra Cheese Bar, with half an hour to spare before closing time and stocked up with enough delicious product to see us through a fair few pre-dinner wine, cheese and cracker evenings. Eltham's got some interesting dairy-related history, and its street art demonstrates the enormous talent of local artists, but we had another mission for the day, and that was to see Dawson Falls before heading out west to Ōpunake for the night.

As usual I'm overawed by the beauty of our mature native bush, and it is close to us on both sides of the 6km narrow, winding but sealed road to the Dawson Falls Visitor Centre within the Egmont National Park boundary. A fine pou stands outside the centre while Taranaki Maunga (formerly Mt Egmont) provides a stunning backdrop above the forest. Bad news for those travelling with pets though; signage advises a strict 'no dog' policy, even if said dog is kept in the vehicle. We stop at the small, historic power station near the visitor centre. It's 100 years old and was moved to its present site, only 70m from the road, having previously been used in Wellington. Then it's down a series of steps to the falls themselves. The height of the steps lead us to believe that they were built by someone with long legs, but the view of the falls from the bottom makes the walk worthwhile.

Surfers from all over the world come to catch the waves at Taranaki's many beaches. In fact, the 105km State Highway 45 heading south from New Plymouth to Hāwera is known as the Surf Highway. We've based ourselves at Ōpunake Beach, just across the dunes from the beach itself. Patrolled by lifeguards in the summer, it's said to be one of the safest swimming beaches in the country, although it's recommended that swimmers avoid the southern end. Ōpunake Beach Holiday Park, where we stayed, has a photo book showing the hordes of visitors and vehicles that show up for a surf or a swim in the holiday season. The Park also has a children's paddling pool complete with a dragon slide.

There's a rāhui in place on the coast to prevent the gathering of shellfish, particularly pāua, to protect these species for the future. Dramatic cliffs are a feature along this coast and Ōpunake has its own clifftop walk as part of the Ōpunake Loop Trail. At the top of the hill above the holiday park there's a painted tōtara post dating from 1890. It's actually a ship's navigational marker, a relic from when the only access was by sea; when lined up with another post on the beach it identified the

approach lane for vessels coming in to tie up at the old jetty. In the town itself, more than 20 historic and contemporary murals are a feature, and there are a couple of second-hand shops full of interesting bits and pieces. With the sun setting over the ocean it was the perfect spot for enjoying some of that wine and Eltham cheese.

When they take time from their busy routines, farmers near Surf Highway 45 south of Ōpunake must look up in wonder at views of the ocean on one side of their pastures and Taranaki Maunga on the other. But today's lush green paddocks and stunning views belie the fact that this land was once highly contested during the devastating Land Wars of the 1860s. Several monuments and the remnants of redoubts and pā sites acknowledge these conflicts, but it's not until a visit to Tawhiti Museum near Hāwera that we realise, through seeing the most detailed and interesting information, the impact of these and the previous Musket Wars of the 1820s.

4. Native bush on the way to Dawson Falls Visitor Centre **5.** Pou outside the visitor centre with a glimpse of Taranaki Maunga in the background

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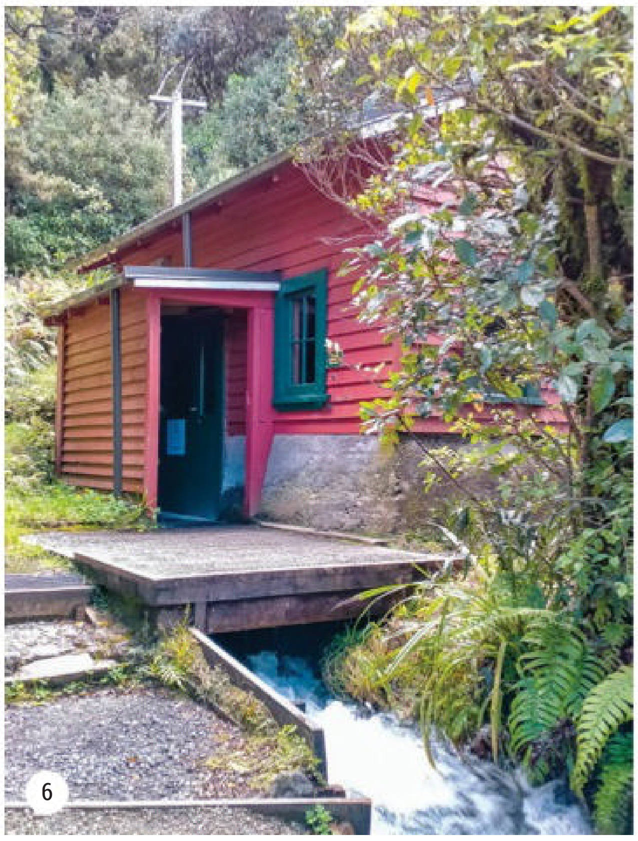
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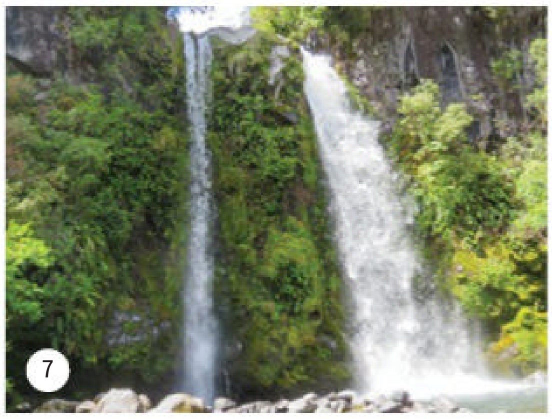
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Tawhiti Museum and its historical Traders and Whalers presentation are 'must-see' experiences. Apart from learning such a lot of previously unfamiliar history, the sculpting and modelling skill of proprietor Nigel Ogle demonstrates an incomparable degree of patience, talent and ingenuity. From life-sized human figures to the tiniest detail in the many dioramas, this is world-class representation at its best. One display shows a realistic-looking child in tears while Mum cooks dinner, and another display has a little girl clutching a soft toy on her dad's knee as he drives an early model tractor. An area is dedicated to entrepreneurial settler Chew Chong who helped many families stave off starvation by purchasing wood ear fungus from them for export. Chew Chong also made butter and was awarded a silver cup for the 'best half ton of butter packed suitable for export'. This was at a time when Chinese settlers were not always well treated, but Chew Chong was eventually recognised for his contribution to the community.

10

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Traders and Whalers includes a boat trip through a darkened canal, again revealing history and again with some interesting surprises and previously unknown facts. Learning that sailing ships had 20–30 kilometres of rigging that needed to be replaced every 4–5 years made me realise just what a valuable commodity our harakeke (flax) was at the time.

So much to see, to learn, to reminisce at, and so much that demonstrates just how much our society has changed over the years. We're accompanied by sound effects including birdsong and barking dogs, and there are surprises and laughs to be had along the way.

We were at the displays for several hours but were told that some visitors, particularly those who choose to listen to the audio that accompanies the dioramas, have taken up to two days to see and hear details of our past. Buoyed by our visit, we're confident in recommending it to anyone.

Our final Taranaki trip was to a secluded setting at the end of a long, winding, hilly, but mostly sealed road with some magnificent rural views. At approximately 46km long, Lake Rotorangi was formed in 1984 when the Pātea River was dammed for electricity generation. The southern end of the long narrow lake has a campground and toilets, a boat ramp and a 1.5km walking track. It's a very pretty place where we went for a wander then ate lunch while watching boaties towing kids on biscuits, kayakers, paddleboarders and swimmers enjoying themselves.

My organisational skills need work as, once again, although we've been there before, we didn't leave ourselves enough time for a good look around the Stratford, Eltham and Hāwera areas. We got lost looking for Eltham's 17ha Lake Rotokare, a stopover for migrating birds and with a 4km walk, and among other things, we've yet to follow the interesting-sounding branch railway line on the 3hr York Loop Track, and to spend time in Pātea and Waverley. Still, we've got a good excuse to return – Taranaki – you're still in our sights!

6. Historic power station **7.** Dawson Falls **8.** Guardian of the paddling pool **9.** Middleton's Beach, Ōpunake **10.** Views from Ōpunake Loop Trail **11.** Historic marker at Ōpunake **12.** Wine-down time as the sun sets over Ōpunake Beach **13.** Taranaki Maunga **14.** Power station

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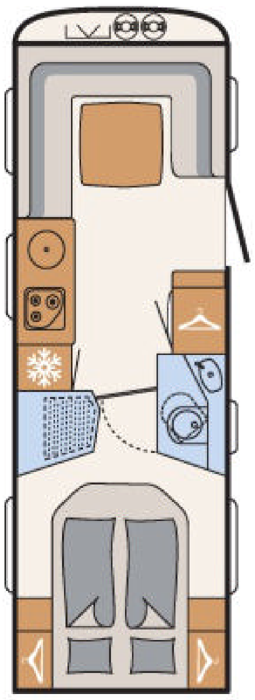

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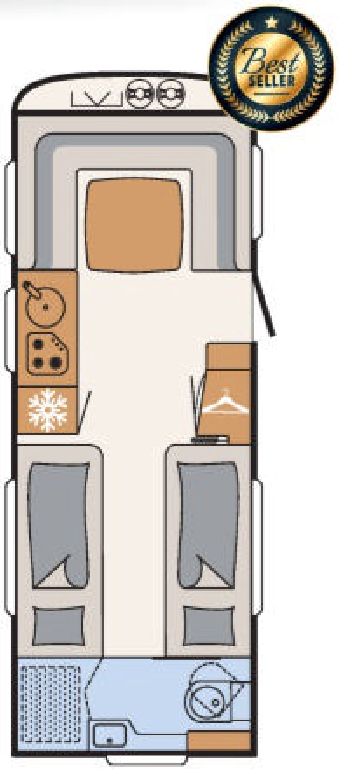

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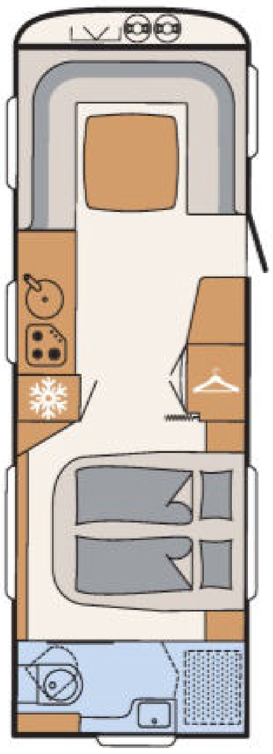

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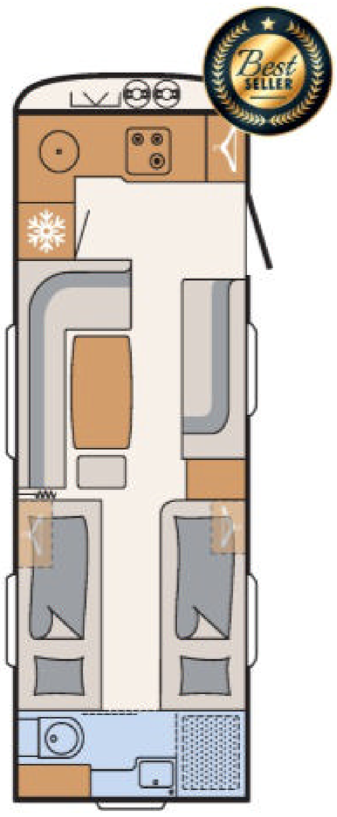

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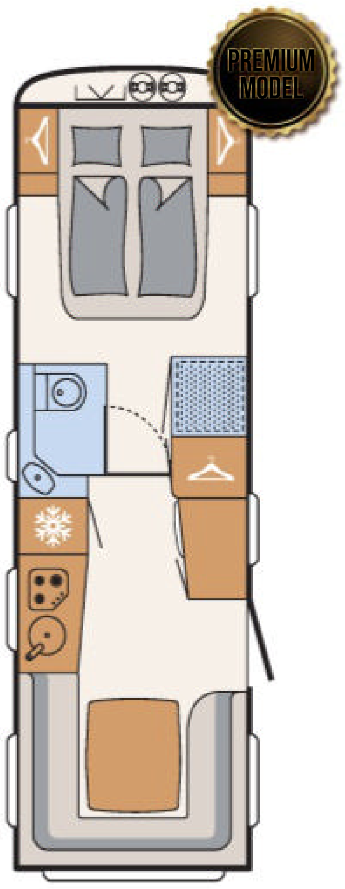

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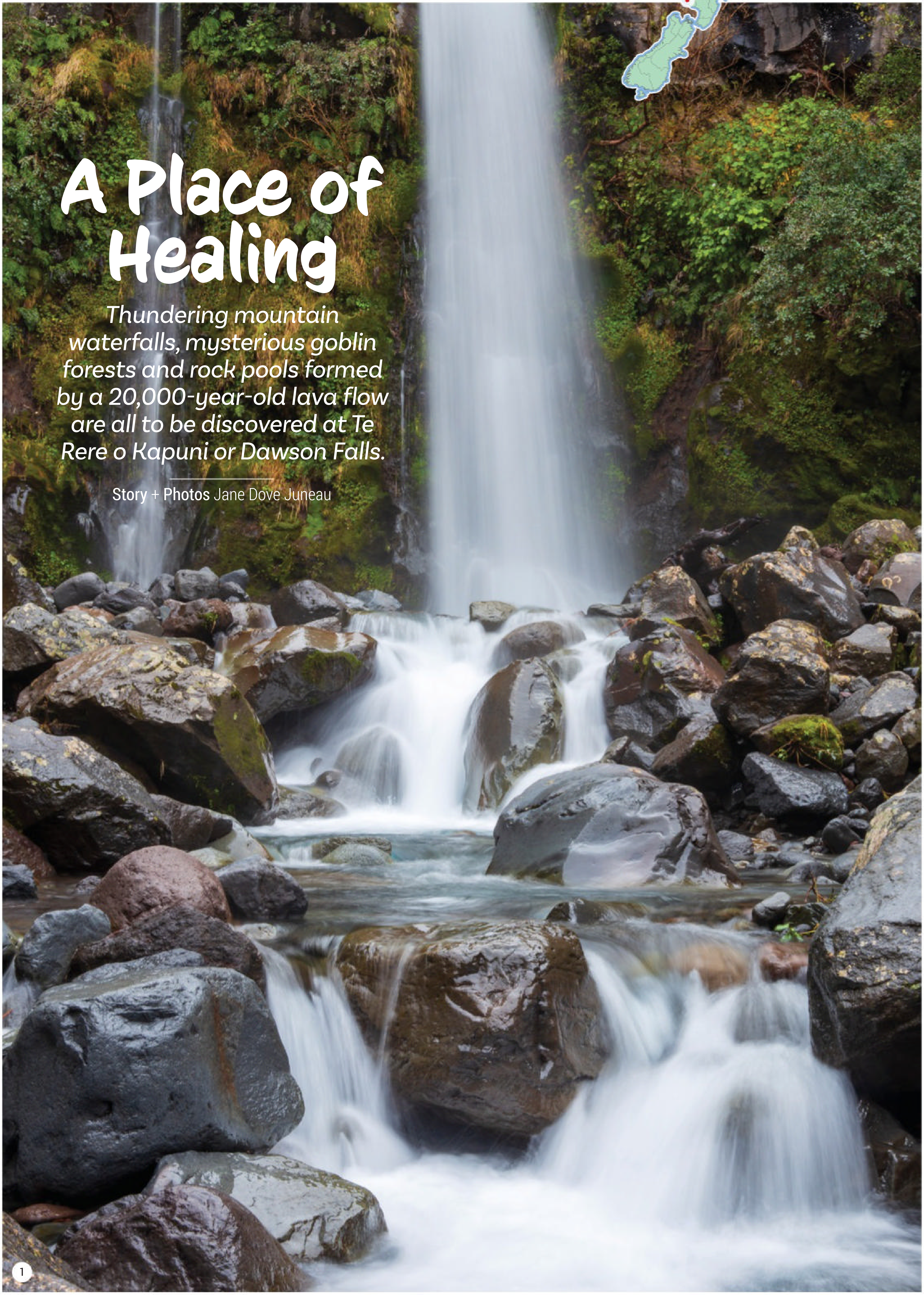
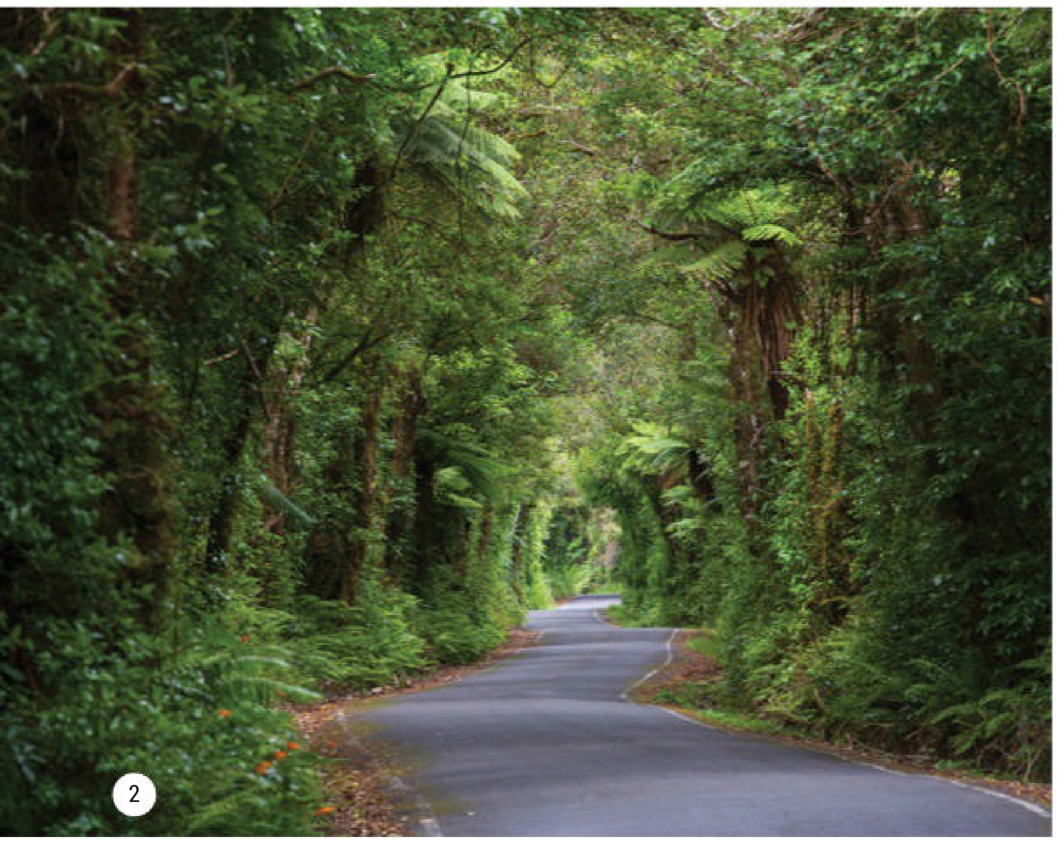
A Place of Healing

Thundering mountain waterfalls, mysterious goblin forests and rock pools formed by a 20,000-year-old lava flow are all to be discovered at Te Rere o Kapuni or Dawson Falls.

Story + Photos Jane Dove Juneau

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The narrow paved road winds up to Dawson Falls/Te Rere o Kapuni through a tunnel of green native forest. The road divides into two as it passes a large tree left standing in the middle of the road. As we travel higher and gain elevation the trees become shorter and the corners tighter. We squeak past one car – luckily not another camper as there is so little space. The road ends not far beyond the path down to Dawson Falls waterfall, Te Rere o Noke, and opens into a parking area below the National Park visitor centre where a tall Māori carved pou (post) graces the lawn. In the background Taranaki Maunga lies moodily under a blanket of cloud.

Dawson Falls is the southern access point on Taranaki Maunga to a range of hikes, including one to Syme Hut on top of Fanthams Peak and the southern summit route, short hikes down to see the waterfall that Dawson Falls is named after, walks in the 'Goblin Forest' to Wilkies Pools, and access to the Round the Mountain Track and Lake Dive.

The visitor centre displays aspects of the ecology, flora and fauna of Egmont National Park. Inside the centre there is a piece of history – a section of the old Syme Hut from the

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6

1930s. It is a good place to talk to the park ranger about hikes in the area, especially to discuss the weather conditions on the mountain before heading out. Outside, the stunning pou was carved by Albert Tamati and depicts the Ngāti Ruanui tribe's relationship with the mountain. Just down the road is a small hydroelectric station with a generator made by General Electric in around 1901. It was installed in 1935 to power the Dawson Falls lodge and visitor centre.

South Taranaki iwi are in the process of building a new centre with a café and restaurant to replace the Dawson Falls lodge, which was a Swiss Alpine style building originally built by Thomas Dawson, the first European to see the waterfall. Ngāruahine bought the lodge in 2016 as part of a long-held ambition to put its footprint back on the maunga. Te Rere o Kapuni is considered a spiritual place for the local iwi and a place of healing connected to the cleansing power of water, a place where many whānau come for baptisms.

After a helpful chat with the lady at the visitor centre we decide to go for a short afternoon walk around the Wilkies Pools loop track then down to Te Rere o Noke waterfall. The next day we plan to walk over to Stratford Plateau and up to the Manganui Ski Area on the recently upgraded section of the Round the Mountain Track.

The Wilkies Pools track wanders up through the eerie Goblin Forest where dark tree branches covered in dangling green moss hang overhead. The gnarled and twisted tree trunks are mainly kāmahi trees that begun life perched on the trunks of other trees. The high rainfall feeds the growth of hanging mosses, liverworts and ferns creating a mysterious looking setting that could be home to goblins, hobbits or elves. The track opens out to a riverbed and follows it up to Wilkies Pools, a cascading series of waterholes, formed by a 20,000-year-old lava flow. The clear mountain water is inviting and we gingerly take a quick plunge into the freezing water. Feeling refreshed we glide down the loop track past a number of small waterfalls created as small streams plunge down from the mountain.

1. Māori believe the waterfall has healing power
2. The road winds up through a tunnel of forest
3. The tall pou was carved by Albert Tamati
4. Detail of the pou depicting Ngāti Ruanui's relationship with Taranaki Maunga
5. The Dawson Falls or Te Rere o Noke waterfall
6. Tai captures the thundering alpine waterfall
7. The twisted trees in the Goblin Forest
8. The trail up to Wilkies Pools follows the Kapuni Stream

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I hear the sound of Te Rere o Noke/Dawson Falls thundering through the forest. The track winds down a steep hill with many steps, opening out to a view of the waterfall partway down. The water drops 18 metres down a lush green face to a rock pool below. We reach the bottom, mesmerised by the waves of water pouring from above. It is easy to imagine Noke the Māori warrior hiding from his pursuers behind the waterfall – the falls of Noke or Te Rere o Noke.

After a 10-minute walk we are back at the camper and settle in for the night ready for our morning hike. The elevation at Dawson Falls is 902 metres and the temperature drops pretty low overnight, but there is an alternative freedom camping site a short distance from the bottom of the road at Hollard Gardens. A few hikers arrive around dawn likely heading up Fanthams Peak. The morning sun soon warms us and we see glimpses of Mt Taranaki towering above.

We hike back through the forest past Wilkies Pools and on to Stratford Plateau. The new track around the mountainside makes hiking easy and it is a surprisingly short distance, about one hour 20 minutes, around to The Plateau. We decide to carry on up to Manganui Ski Area, a track I have walked many times when it's been covered in snow. The track passes a flying fox that spans a deep ravine and is used to carry skis and equipment across to the ski area. The trail goes through a tunnel perched on a cliff, then follows along a narrow section of the Manganui Gorge and crosses an avalanche-prone area, before winding up to the club ski field where there is a comfortable public shelter. We sit eating our lunch and watching the clouds roll in. High above, the line of the top rope tow disappears into the mist. The track continues on to Tahurangi lodge for people feeling energetic, but we decide to walk back to Dawson Falls via the Ridge Loop Track, a narrow old track where we see some beautiful sections of forest.

Although the weather was cloudy, the walk through the forest and along the newly improved section of track to Stratford Plateau was really interesting. Dawson Falls/Te Rere o Kapuni has a larger selection of hikes than I have mentioned, from a short 10-minute hike down to the waterfall, an overnight hike to Syme Hut for an alpine experience, or a night in the forest at Waingongoro Hut; there is something for everyone. It does pay to check the hours of the visitor centre if you want to get information on the hikes. As locals know, the weather changes quickly on Taranaki Maunga so if planning a hike make sure you are well prepared with mountain clothing and let someone know your hiking intentions.

9. The two buildings in the distance are on Manganui Ski Field
10. Rick looks down into Manganui Gorge
11. Wilkies Pools are fed by icy mountain water

11

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A Great Walk –

Hapuakohe's Hiking Haven

Gary maps the Matahuru Valley Walk – a newly opened private track offering a rural retreat for the weekend walker.

Story + Photos Gary Patterson

1

What's the recipe for creating a tempting private walk? I think it's similar to baking a cake for a walker's indulgence. First of all you need the right mix of ingredients: a good location, scenic values, some heritage, and a taste of nature. Secondly, effort is required with some ups and downs, some sweat and hopefully not too many tears. Lastly add in a good measure of home comforts such as hot showers, comfy beds and a good night's sleep. The icing on the top the cake of any private walk is a tasty meal provided to enrich the experience. So with all these ingredients on offer at the new Matahuru Valley Walk, I cut the cake, take the first bite and begin to tuck in.

I reach the Matahuru Valley late in the afternoon; it's located on the western side of the Hapuakohe Range, roughly located between the townships of Huntly and Paeroa, less than an hour's drive from Hamilton and the Bombay Hills. My job is to map the track and to offer advice to the three farming families through whose properties the track passes. The experience is made up of a half-day walk, a cottage retreat, followed by a day of walking, and I try their offering before the very first walkers arrive in a few weeks. For this special mapping trip, I sit down with the families at Tui Ridge, the original farm cottage that is now used as a walking base. Here we share a delicious meal and hear about their journey as they took their first step into agri-tourism. It's a fine evening for a townie mixing with these awesome country folk.

Walkers begin their trip around midday. After a briefing the half-day walk begins from just out the back door of the cottage. From here I start to map my way up through a pretty pocket of QEII Trust forest and climb towards the highest part of the range. I love the contrast of leaving the sunny rolling countryside of the cottage and entering another darker more moody world deep under the canopy. I do a little poking around to discover the best line for the track in order to include the highlights of the upper Matahuru catchment. As I walk I pass by the giant knobby trunks of pūriri, kawakawa and kahikatea trees. Between the trunks are the spider's web-like tangles of supplejack vines, which hamper my progress up the hillside. I glance down at my GPS screen and note that my meandering and searching for the best alignment looks as complex as some of the tangled vines. Soon the trees begin to part and I glimpse the green pastures and farm track beyond a rustic mossy farm gate. From here the track continues in the open to the skyline. The telecommunications tower on the ridge directs me and the station owner Kirsten towards the top. Kirsten is a mother of two who has somehow found time to leave farm work, her half-time IT job and her commercial plant nursery to show me around the property. That's one busy woman.

Soon we reach a fork in the farm track just below the tower. While it's easy to take a left and head down, we take a right which leads up a few metres to the skyline. The views from the ridgeline are of lush podocarp forest and across the Hauraki Plains to the sister tower on Mt Te Aroha. Those with good eyes could almost see the entire Waikato basin from here on a good day. Over my left shoulder are the steep mountains of the Kaimai range which flatten out into the Mamaku Plateau, then to the south are the rising volcanic cones of Maungatautari and Pirongia and behind me are the Bombay Hills. Up here we discover a trig station tucked in behind the tower that my GPS records as 535 metres in altitude – we have earned a snack.

Still chewing, I am led down to a second viewpoint which offers quite different views, this time of the Coromandel Peninsula as it drifts out into the Hauraki Gulf. My lips form a smile; from here I can see last week's mapping trip of the new private Pahi Coastal Walk. Both of these rural walking retreats are within easy reach for half the country's population and offer something different from the local public walking tracks. These new tracks will both be popular adventures.

Our day walk ends by tramping down through the pastures of the rural valley past bouncy spring lambs that are still finding their feet. After passing the farm sheds we complete the loop and return to the cottage. This is where walkers will chill out as they complete the loop in the late afternoon and soak up the peace of this rural life. The countryside setting and the delicious meals enjoyed on the sunny deck make this a perfect overnight escape from the nearby cities. As for me, I can't escape the need to finish my work this evening by downloading my GPS data, flicking through the day's pics and turning in early for another big day of mapping ahead.

Second-day walkers could have a relaxed start with a hot brew and slowly wakening

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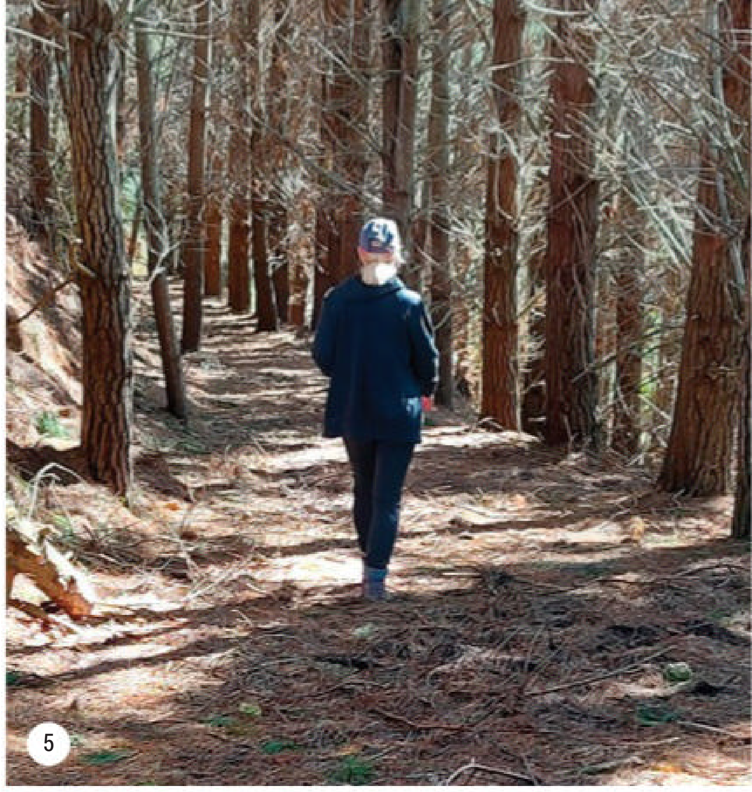
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as the sun rises over the range. My breakfast is delivered courtesy of the local hens; their oversized eggs make a nutritional start to the day. I make a short trip down the valley and meet up with Mary, the owner of the first part of the day walk. She has farmed this land with her husband for over 40 years and has loads of local knowledge. While the walk is unguided, Mary makes an exception for me and guides me along her section of track. We cross paddocks with grazing sheep and cattle and climb over a saddle and take in different views from those of yesterday. After sidling through some forest we soon meet up with Sian who is the owner of the larger and remaining part of the day walk. The women tag team and my new guide takes me to another part of the property with large kauri trees before we descend to ford the pretty Matahuru Stream. There's no drama on the crossing and it's not long before we reach an appealing waterhole (there's another one just upstream too). What an idyllic spot for lunch and a cool plunge on a hot summer day, surrounded as it is by majestic kahikatea trees and sun-warmed rocks.

We find a new track alignment with blazes above the stream, heading through a native forest block leading to the highest part of

6

1. The views from Grandad John's Lookout are superb **2.** Rural countryside walking at its best **3.** Tui Ridge cottage is a lovely country retreat **4.** About to enter the QEII forest reserve **5.** Passing through the pines to enter the podocarp forest **6.** The first fording of the Matahuru Stream **7.** Climbing up to the highest point of the walk **8.** Reaching the top at Maungakawa (535m)

7

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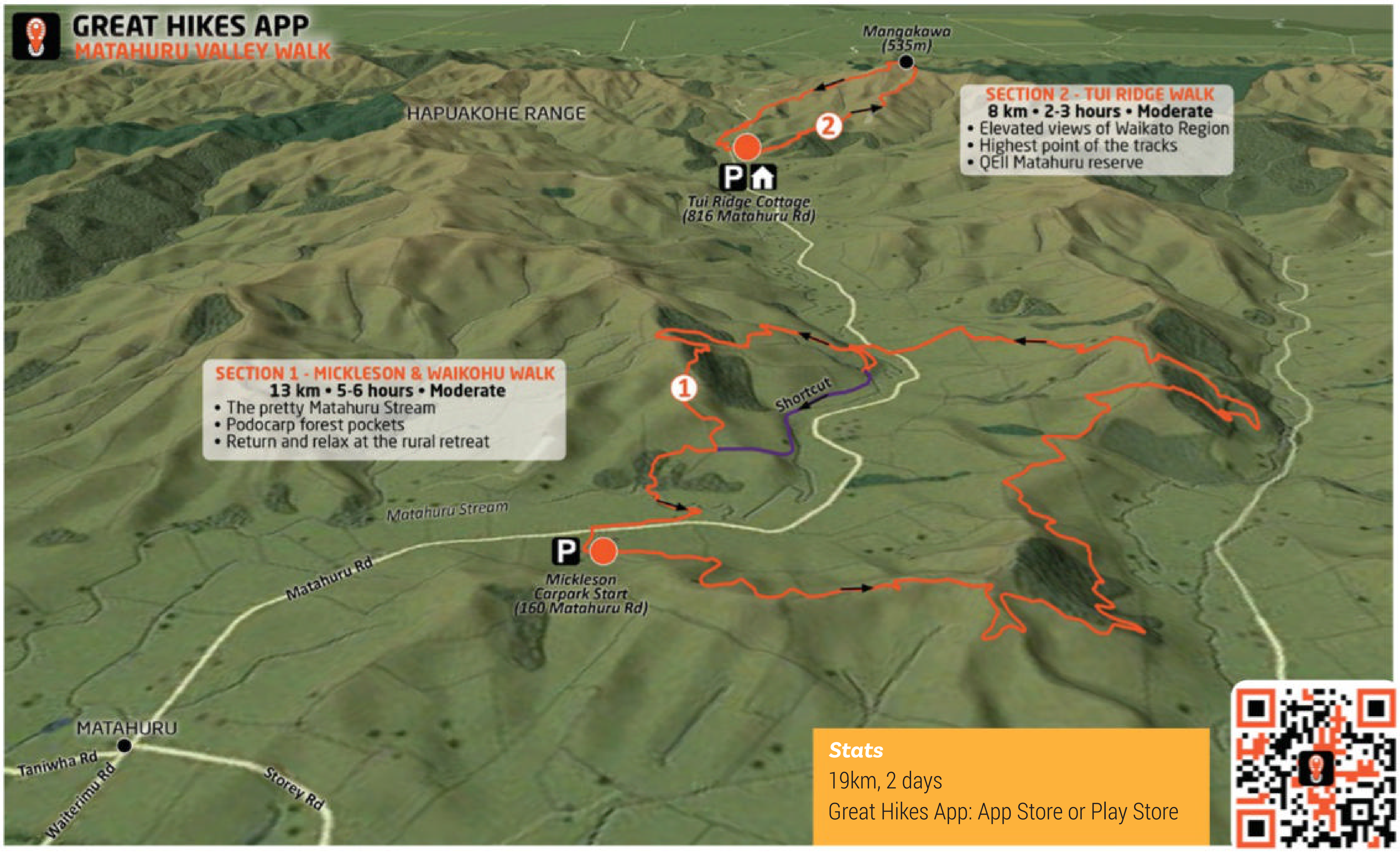
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2
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Matahuru Stream
Matahuru Rd
P
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MATAHURU
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SECTION 2 - TUI RIDGE WALK
8 km • 2-3 hours • Moderate

- Elevated views of Waikato Region
- Highest point of the tracks
- QEII Matahuru reserve

SECTION 1 - MICKLESON & WAIKOHU WALK
13 km • 5-6 hours • Moderate

- The pretty Matahuru Stream
- Podocarp forest pockets
- Return and relax at the rural retreat

Stats
19km, 2 days
Great Hikes App: App Store or Play Store

today's walk. Here there are 360-degree views of the entire Matahuru Valley catchment. We weigh up a few options and discover a route through the forest which leads to a rolling ridgeline that we can follow back down to the waterway. We find ourselves walking between the newly planted native trees, which in a short order will mop up sediment to protect the Whangamarino wetlands downstream. Beyond a ford we complete the loop and return to our vehicle at Mary's place. It's been a great couple of days of walking, talking and retreating. It's also the end of my mapping of private walks for this year. If the Great Walks on the Great Hikes App are the main course, then the private walks are a delightful after-dinner treat. Each caters for every tramping taste, they're garnished in diversity and always have a dollop of sweet comforts. So roll out the menu and book a trip now!

9. Nikau palms rising to the heavens

10. The views from Grandad John's Lookout are superb

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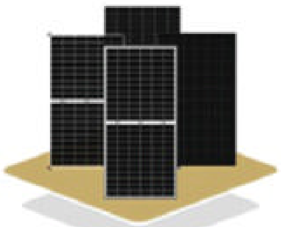

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50 day North Island road trip

Allan Dick, Audrey and Audrey's Mum cross the ditch for seven weeks in the North Island.

Story + Photos Allan Dick

1

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Most of my travels in the last eight or nine years have been confined to the South Island and that's not just because I live in Ōamaru. There have been other factors as well, chiefly that most of my travels have had an edge of adventure because my vehicle was a much used, abused but loved Nissan Pathfinder with a fitted foam mattress in the back, and I went offroad to find lonely and beautiful camping spots. And it's easier to do that in the South Island than it is in the North. Simple really – similar land mass but four million live north of Cook Strait, about one million I can call neighbours here in the south.

But the arrival, a smidgen over a year ago, of a Mercedes-Benz Sprinter campervan changed that. The Nissan four-wheel drive remains on the fleet, but comfort has taken precedence over adventure. Many of our destinations have become more civilised, and we even discovered that parking up with neighbours is not exactly the end of the world.

So, mid-October we decided to venture

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beyond the Fringe of Empire, cross Cook Strait and explore the North Island.

I actually kept something approximating a daily diary, but after six weeks it became the size of *War and Peace*, so back to memory and impressions – besides which, my hand writing is so bad, five minutes after having written something I can't easily decipher it.

Again, we were planless – some would say clueless. I had a speaking engagement at an event in (relatively) nearby Waimate on the Saturday night and we were booked on one of the 'good ships' Interislander on Tuesday morning. That was that. No idea where we were going (except north), no idea for how long, and no return ferry booking.

Basically, we went north as far as Kaikohe travelling on the western side of the North Island, via Taranaki and New Plymouth and south via the eastern side, including East Cape.

We were going to spend some time in Auckland on the return south, but we got onto the Northern Motorway about 10.30am, traffic was light and without dropping below 95kph we suddenly found ourselves at the top of the Bombay Hills. Auckland was behind us and the open road stretched ahead. That was that. We missed out on the fun Auckland had to offer.

We were on the road almost seven weeks with pretty much a fresh start every day. Every morning we asked "where to today?" Then one morning, instead of that, we said "let's go home". To be honest, we had cabin fever.

We set out with visions of finding a parking spot each afternoon and spending time until drinks/dinner time sitting in our camp chairs with minimal clothes, reading, perspiring, getting lobsterised and blobbing out. But in seven weeks we really only had two or three days when we could do that; on the rest it was raining, overcast, blowing, or all three.

Getting a ferry crossing coming home wasn't easy – staffing issues meant fewer sailings – and we had to cruise around for almost another week before we scored a berth.

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Now, that all probably sounds like the trip was a failure. It wasn't. It was climate change and the unsettled weather that was the issue.

Our nightly parks were a huge mixture of places – total freedom camping where we thought we could, council-approved 'freedom' sites, DOC camps, NZMCA sites (both camping grounds and park-over properties) and both council and commercial camping grounds.

The campervan/motorhome – I haven't yet worked out the difference – is based on a Mercedes Sprinter van which means rear-wheel drive and that gives a bit more ability to get to some reasonably remote places.

I don't mind paying for overnight parking/camping – that's not the reason for the mix of places – what I try to avoid is crowds.

For some people, paying is something they would only do at gunpoint and they have made a study of where to find places where they don't have to pay – that is free camping, not freedom camping. Freedom camping demands freedom and some romance and a touch of adventure.

One night, in a lovely spot alongside the Waikato River near Karapiro we spoke to a couple of elegant middle-aged ladies who told us they had been on the road for months and not had a single night where they had to pay. I'm no snob, but when they gave us a run down on places where they had parked over, I would have found a camping ground rather than stay there.

The council-approved free camping spot at Ōhope was such a place – four parking spots side by side looking at the back of a toilet block. OK for some people but we went back to Whakatāne.

Helen, Audrey's Mum, became a bit of a whizz at finding us nightly accommodation, her fingers dancing a tune over the phone keyboard. The priority, the absolute priority, was that the place had to be dog friendly. Not always easy.

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I was impressed to find that most, if not all councils, have embraced the policy of 'free camping' with some of the places we stayed being a bit more than minimalistic and certainly were nearly freedom camping as I would describe it – Karapiro was such a place.

One of the council-approved free camping areas in a small town in the Far North had room for four vehicles, lined up alongside a public dunny block and a sign that outlined the rules for staying there. I was alarmed to read in large red print "You are welcome to stay; however, we recommend to go to a formal camping ground as your presence here might attract unwanted attention from undesirable locals." Or words to that effect.

In another council-approved free camping spot, on the East Coast north of Whakatāne we saw examples of people behaving badly. This was a large public carpark, right on the beach looking towards East Cape. The council had allocated a dozen or so areas for 'camping' at one end of the park, but traffic was light and there was plenty of room to have three or four empty parks on either side. Then two groups came in with doorsliders, parked on the grass outside the camping area and set up large-ish tents despite signs clearly saying "No Camping".

I'm not averse to having a word with people like that, but Audrey's Mother urged that I look the other way and pretend I didn't see them.

It was a prime spot though.

On the way to Ōpunake for, I think, our third night in the North Island we called to see Audrey's Mother's aunt and uncle Keith and Jean who live on a small lifestyle block just north of Whanganui where they breed Highland cattle – as pets, never for meat! This couple have travelled all over the world to some extraordinarily remote and often dangerous places. I watched as Keith showed me a world map on a wall showing where they have had adventures. And they have done it the hard way. I felt humbled.

Before Ōpunake we detoured slightly to visit the small seaside village of Ohawe were there is a small, walled cemetery for the British soldiers from the 'Land Wars'. I had been there before and knew there was a poignant grave of a 13 or 14-year-old lad who was the company bugler.

Getting there involves crossing a swampy, grassy paddock. Audrey's Mother was leading and picking her way through the boggy bits when she slipped, reached out and grabbed a wire fence. It was electrified. Her hair literally stood on end! At the same time I slipped and went up to my ankles in mud. That was enough, we returned to the Mercedes for a change of clothing and footwear.

Ōpunake is on the 'Surf Highway' around Cape Taranaki and we parked overnight, just out of town, on the edge of a cliff with surf crashing and pounding all night below us.

There was a reason for overnighting near Ōpunake – breakfast at Arty Tarts Café where the pies are much written about by travellers. We weren't disappointed – they were works of art!

1. Just before the writer got a bit gung ho on Ocean Beach and did damage to the campervan! **2.** Northward bound. Crossing Cook Strait heading for Wellington **3.** "Oh no thank you". Audrey turns her nose up. The writer didn't **4.** This is a dessert! Chocolate cigar with realistic ash in Cuban restaurant in Whakatāne **5.** When a building gets in the road of road widening what do you do? Cut the corner off the building! On the road to Totara North **6.** A busker fools around with Audrey outside the famous shop over the water in Rawene **7.** The Awakino mine looks over SH3. It is a souvenir of WWII **8.** A quiet country road. The "back road" from Awakino to Kawhia

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On towards the cape, stopping off to quietly pay respects at Parihaka before a short stopover in New Plymouth and continuing on to – wait for this – Waitara.

Now Waitara comes with a mixed reputation but the council-approved parking spot was perfect, as was the weather. Next morning there were dozens of families fishing along the banks of the river. You judge a place as you find it, and we both enjoyed Waitara.

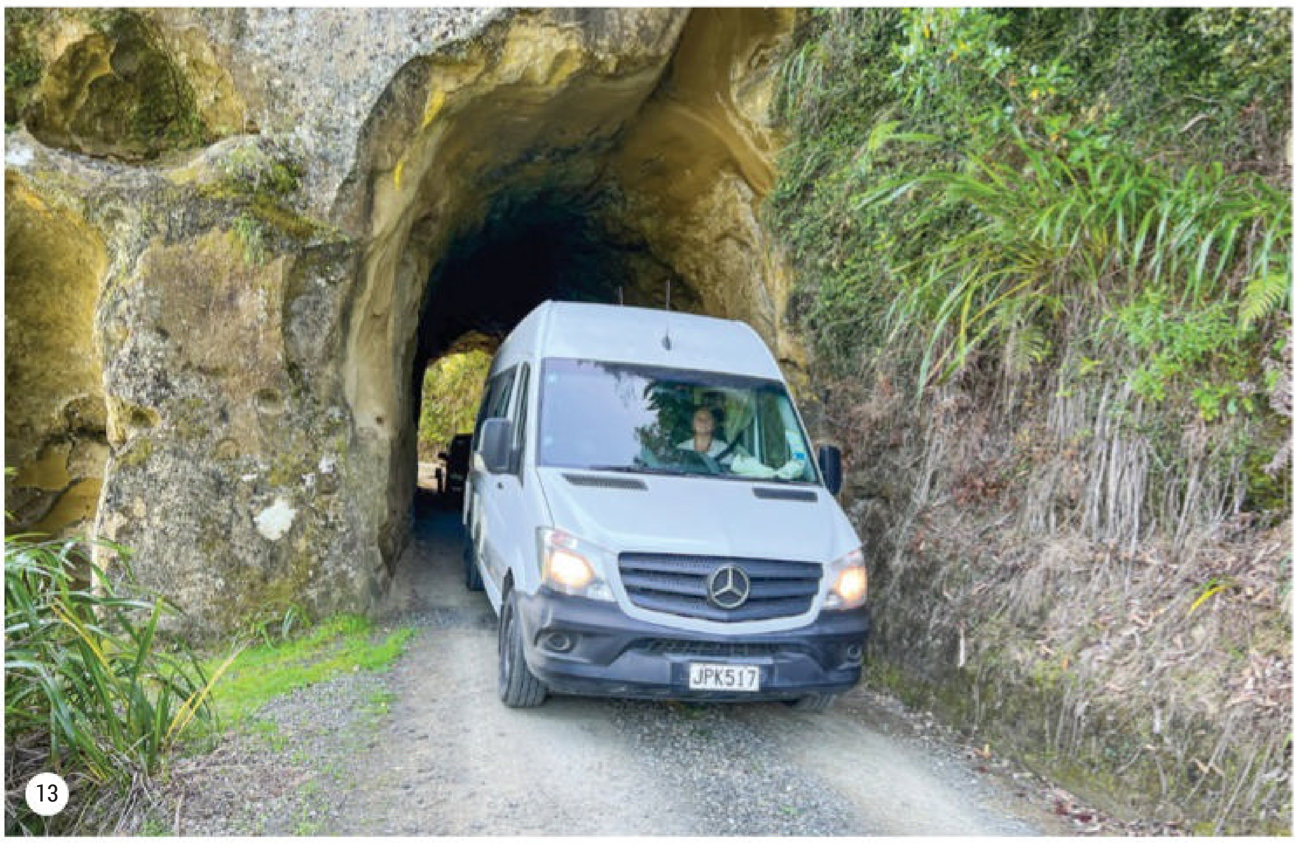
12

Showing our lack of planning, from Waitara we made a detour south quite specifically to see Stratford and extra specifically the totally-out-of-place glockenspiel clock tower, and even more so to arrive in time to see the performance of the balcony scene from Romeo and Juliet. Yes, it is probably the corniest thing anywhere in New Zealand, but it's also kinda' special.

That night was spent on an old bit of SH3 at Awakino that had been bypassed with a realignment. Dinner that night was at the Awakino pub which was very busy. Bit of a laugh as they found room for us in the dining room next to the cage of the pet cockatiel – but first they had to entice him back in as he had the run of the place, fluttering about having a great time.

Cracking night.

Something a bit different the next day; we left SH3 and headed up the coast on roads less travelled – gravel roads, lots of twists and turns with a visit to the beach at Waikawau accessed by a foot tunnel.



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We had a look around the lonely coastal town of Marakopa; saw that the pub at Te Anga is now a house; the carpark at Piripiri Falls was chocka' so we didn't bother, and the natural bridge just up the road was closed because of track damage. So we tiki-toured onwards ending up a couple of days later at a total surprise – the Glen Afton Bush Railway. This is a park-over-property set in bush and is both picturesque and a great place to stay. In fact, we stayed two nights and it was one of our favourite places on the entire trip and worthy of a stand-alone story.

Then we had two nights at another park-over-property, this time at Graham's Beach at the tip of the Āwhitu Peninsula, on the Manukau Harbour and under the flight path of aircraft using Auckland airport. There's a commercial vineyard nearby and we had to buy product which was impressively good.

From here we headed for the Far North, aiming for Whangārei but first some exploring of back roads around the Hokianga and on to Kaikohe. Audrey's Mother's mother, Jo, is on the other side of 90 and lives in Whangārei, so that became our destination, intending to visit Auckland and friends on the way back.

In Whangārei we stayed a couple of nights in the excellent Top 10 holiday camp almost within walking distance of Jo's place. We have stayed here before and it really is superb. We did touristy things like visit the new Hundertwasser Centre, and drive out to Bream Head and then remote and pretty Pataua South.

The Hundertwasser Centre is extraordinary. There has been a bit of controversy with its creation taking away from the toilets at Kawakawa – but this is really chalk and cheese. The Centre is just plain sensational.

Kawakawa is Audrey's Mother's home town where her folks ran the movie theatre – Kings – so there is a lot of connection. Helen's father, Bruce, achieved a lot in life apart from commercial developments in Kawakawa and gifting a large area of native bush to the crown. He found the boat that eventually became the Kelly Tarlton Museum, and once he saved a young lad from drowning when his Lilo drifted away from a beach. That lad was Mike Moore, briefly a New Zealand prime minister.

The town got a huge boost when the out-of-left-field Hundertwasser toilet was opened, but it was no building block for progress. Instead it's still a one-trick pony and it's now become – and I hate saying this – just another smelly, wet, public toilet. I reckon it's time to close it as a toilet, preserve it for the unique place that it is, make it a mini museum and put the Hundertwasser focus on Whangārei.

We took the train ride at Kawakawa – an excellent experience in every way.

More tiki touring around the Far North – a night in a park-over-property near the Horeke Boulders on the far reaches of the Hokianga was great, then across to the east side and Matauri Bay (where Mike Moore lived his last years) with all of its history. This is a beautiful place and we thought of staying, but the weather saw us move on to Tauranga Bay.

Tauranga Bay is gorgeous – it's a commercial camping ground and you park nose out to sea, right on the beach and, if you have a mind to, can go fishing right from where you are parked. We spent two nights here, but the rain cometh. And cometh. And cometh. It drove us out and back to the Top 10 in Whangārei where it seemed half of the world was also seeking the security of the place.

We spent another couple of nights here, had dinner with Jo and then headed south.

9-10. The railway at Kawakawa still runs up the main street and brings traffic to a halt **11-12.** One of the best camping spots was at the Glen Afton railway in the Waikato hills **13.** The writer's Mercedes camper' in a tunnel on a back road near Awakino **14.** The Hundertwasser Centre in Whangārei is sensational **15.** Restored lighthouse at the entrance to Manukau Harbour **16.** The public toilets at Matakana are stunning works of art. Audrey approves

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Really we were putting off heading for and into Auckland – Auckland traffic and a seven-and-a-bit metre long Mercedes camper aren't entirely compatible.

On the way, we spent a couple of days exploring the Leigh Matakana area spending two or three nights in park-over-places and campervan parks. But we also overnighted in the carpark of the Puhoi Hotel which turned it to be a bit disappointing. We went to order dinner and found the kitchen closed at seven o'clock. But Puhoi's a pretty little town.

Off we went to Matakana – this area is about as far away from the Hokianga as you can get and I thought I would get tense and stressed by the 'trendiness' of the place. Instead we both found it very, very pleasant. No sign of radio star Mike Hosking who, apparently, has a place here.

Time to face the demons of Auckland traffic, but as explained earlier, whizzbang, empty motorway and we zoomed through Auckland without really realising it.

By now, we knew that we needed to make some decisions about getting home.

But we both wanted to 'do' East Cape. On the way we spent a night at the Whakatāne Holiday Park – quite superb and had a fantastic meal out at a Cuban themed restaurant. It was a lot of fun! We also did a loop out to the forestry towns of Kawerau, Murupara and then Kāingaroa Village. To be honest, we wish we hadn't done the latter.

East Cape – SH35 – is a road I have driven many times, but this was a first for Audrey and her Mother. As in the Hokianga region I get a sense of guilt around East Cape. Both regions are poor to the point of being impoverished and maybe even Third World. In both cases the scenery is breathtaking but it's impossible to escape the fact that, in many places, the lifestyle of some people is not what you get in Remuera or Fendalton. I try not to be nosey, or judgemental. Yet there is a pride and a joy about coming from here that is immeasurable. And there is plenty of history here – both Māori and European.

We parked over at the rather featureless NZMCA ground at Te Araroa which is so apart from what the town itself is about, it feels alien. There was a pub here – a hotel more correctly – but it burnt down maybe 10 years ago. It was built perhaps in the thirties and was quite a grand affair hoping to attract tourists and even had a water fountain in the entrance lobby. But tourists with bulging wallets never really came – but then, it is a long and difficult journey.

Back on the road stopping at the usual places – the magnificent church at Tikitiki and on to Ruatoria where the huge pub (with no signage) and most of the shops have a step up into them from footpath level.

As I always do, we spent some time looking around Tokomaru Bay and imagining what it was like in its hey-day during the thirties. The place must have been bustling. Sadly, in the 20 years since I first 'found' Tokomaru Bay many of the old and empty buildings are now falling into dangerous disrepair. Too late to save them, but it would be vandalism to demolish them.

Café 35 in Tokomaru Bay has what are simply New Zealand's best pies. These are extraordinarily good and the only drawback is getting there. I have eaten a lot of pies in my life and without any doubt, these are the best.

We headed for the coast and spent two nights at Anaura Bay – another commercial camping ground based around the old school.

20

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Incredible site but some of the facilities are getting a bit tired; however, this is a very popular place.

I realised here that we had missed the turn off to Waipiro Bay which is where Robert Kerridge began his movie theatre chain, and from him, Helen's father Bruce, had bought the King's theatre in Kawakawa.

At Tolaga Bay we looked at the wharf – and the 'slash' piled high on the beach, not knowing that a week or two later even more would arrive. This really is something that borders on criminal neglect and forestry companies must be made to do something more permanent. We had lunch in Gisborne, and then further south headed out onto the Māhia Peninsula to at least see the gates to the Rocket Lab space launch site, but really it was just too far on narrow roads, so we gave up about halfway there.

We made it to Wairoa that night for a night in the spic and span Riverside Motor Camp. Like Waitara, Wairoa comes with baggage, but like Waitara we found it an attractive and pleasant place. Breakfast next morning was at the legendary Ostler's Bakery before pressing on now that we had decided we were heading home.

We had a night at the DOC campsite at Mount Holdsworth – one of Audrey's Mother's favourite places from when she lived in Wellington. I understand why – large and tranquil. Brunch was at the Clareville Bakery, a place that has a deserved reputation.

Here I had a plan that almost ended in disaster.

I wanted to head to the southern coast and along to Ocean Beach that looks out to the pounding surf of Cook Strait, with home, the South Island, in the distance.

We made it along the beach, but at Ocean Beach itself I got a bit gung ho and failed to see a large rock and crashed the van over it. That broke a bracket holding the grey water tank in place under the campervan and also did some damage to the large sliding door on the side. I managed to hoist the tank back into place and held it there with several kilometres of duct tape, but the sliding door got stuck halfway open.

WELLINGTON
22

By now, the weather had turned from brilliant to gale force winds so we scampered back towards Featherston finding a parking pozzy at the side of the road.

Next morning I phoned the Mercedes dealers, Cable Price, who put me in touch with truck specialist Keith Andrews Limited, and I really was expecting to be told "yes, we can fix your door but we are fully booked until next week …" instead I got "Yeah, sure, bring it in."

So we crossed the Remutakas with the wind roaring through the half-open door, and a mechanic from Keith Andrews quickly diagnosed that my heroics had knocked the door out of its runners, and five minutes later we were back on the road with no charge!

Unbelievable.

Our time in the North Island was coming to an end. Three more nights before our ferry booking. The first was at the Forest Park DOC camp at the end of the Wainuiomata Valley, and our second-to-last night was probably the best night's 'camping' we have ever had.

In Wellington there are a limited number of freedom camping spots in the public carpark next to Te Papa and we got one! You pay a reasonable fee but being able to park slap-bang in the middle of downtown Wellington is a glorious experience. We made the most of it. We walked, ate, drank, ate some more, walked some more and got splashed by the ugly but now 'historic' Cuba Mall bucket fountain. Just a lovely day in every way.

For our last night we simply pulled up at the side of the road near Wellington airport, ready to join the line-up for the ferry at 7am the next morning.

The ferry was full – almost bursting at the seams – and we thought "if we are ever going to get Covid this will be it." A week later we knew we were right! Sniffles, sneezes, aches, pains, headaches, feeling lousy.

But, back on the South Island we had one more night. It poured with rain but we found comfort at the Kaikōura Top 10 motor camp and, like the pies at Café 35, this is simply the best camping ground I have ever experienced. If the Top 10 at Whangārei is five stars, Kaikōura is 10. Simply magnificent.

It's always nice to go away, but nicer to be home.

17. The Ormondville railway station is now accommodation **18.** Orua at the tip of the Āwhitu Peninsula – scene of a massive slip in the late January floods that hit the greater Auckland region **19.** Parihaka – the writer was respectful here **20.** Tokomaru Bay – history hangs in the balance here **22.** 'Wellington' – spot Audrey!

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Stepping into West Coast wilderness

1

Discover the picturesque West Coast on foot with these 10 short walks.

Writer/**Photos** info: **Story** by Ruth McKie (Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai)

There are lots of amazing tracks to explore across Aotearoa New Zealand but it can be daunting to know where to begin. The Department of Conservation website has a helpful track grading system which means you can filter over 1200 different walk options down to what interests and suits you.

Today we're talking about tracks in our easiest track grading category. These are great accessible options if you are perhaps keen to try your first day-walk or tramp; maybe you've got an injury or on the recovery journey. These are also good options if you need something short to stretch the legs while road tripping, or even as a family-friendly opportunity to immerse young people in nature. There are lots of ideal photo opportunities to get that perfect West Coast shot, and there are many ways for people of all ages and stages to enjoy these walks.

SIX TIPS TO STAY SAFE WHILE ENJOYING YOUR ADVENTURES AND LOOK AFTER OUR NATIVE SPECIES:

- Remember to check alerts and updates on the tracks and facilities at www.doc.govt.nz or with a local DOC Visitor Centre before heading out.
- Give native animals space and never feed them – human food can make them sick. Enjoy watching seals from a distance (at least 20m away).
- Be mindful of wildlife, particularly around coastal areas. Keep your dog and the wildlife safe by keeping dogs under control.
- Take your rubbish with you, even food scraps. Most DOC places have no bins, so come prepared to carry all rubbish out with you.
- Poo in a loo – never say no to a loo if you see one.
- Flying a drone without permission is a no no – if you don't have a DOC permit, leave your drone at home. Even better, check the DOC website to see where drones may be allowed with a permit when you're planning a trip.

Take the chance to immerse yourself in nature and embrace what has always been there – look, listen, breathe and feel. While taking the time to recharge in nature, you might also choose to think about how you can give back to nature. Nature needs us and we need nature.

The West Coast is full of breathtaking coastal scenery, glistening glaciers, remote rivers, picturesque lakes and big mountains. Here are 10 stunning easy walks to explore on the West Coast (you can read more about each track on the DOC website www.doc.govt.nz).

Our easiest walk category is broken into two groups – those marked with easy access (the wheelchair symbol) mean they are wheelchair, buggy and stroller friendly. The other walks are still suitable for most ages and fitness levels but there may be steps or slightly rougher ground – walking shoes are required

2

Ōkārito area: Ōkārito Wetland Walk

A short and accessible one-kilometre track located in the coastal settlement of Ōkārito. The track winds through bush before crossing the estuary on a curving boardwalk. There is the option to extend your walk further up to a trig viewpoint, but please note this is a step up in difficulty and not suitable for wheelchairs or buggies. The Ōkārito lagoon is home to more than 76 species of native birds including the kōtuku/white heron and royal spoonbills so exploring this nearby wetland is a great opportunity for birdwatching.

Greymouth area: Brunner Mine Site Walk

The family-friendly historic Brunner Mine is fascinating to explore. There's much to see, including many interactive displays. We suggest allowing one hour to explore the historic site fully. The walk is approximately two kilometres but you can still explore the site without going the full distance. This was one of the country's earliest industrial sites where coal was mined, and coke, firebricks and other products were manufactured from the

1860s until the 1940s. The area is well interpreted with a short walk around the historic coke ovens, brick factory and the remains of tunnel entrances.

Hokitika Scenic Reserve: Hokitika Gorge Walk

Enjoy this one-hour loop along the stunning Hokitika Gorge and the pristine mature podocarp forest of the reserve. Part of the walk, to a viewing platform looking down to the gorge's blue-green waters of the Hokitika River, is wheelchair friendly. You can continue on further up the gorge by foot to explore a swing-bridge, second viewing platform and small waterfalls.

This is a great place to take family or get some stunning photos with multiple loop options ranging from four minutes to one hour, depending on the time you have.

Westport area: Cape Foulwind Walkway

Enjoy one of our best short walks that includes a New Zealand fur seal/kekeno breeding colony, a lighthouse and panoramic views of mountains and coastline. There's also a beach close by, making it a great option for children.

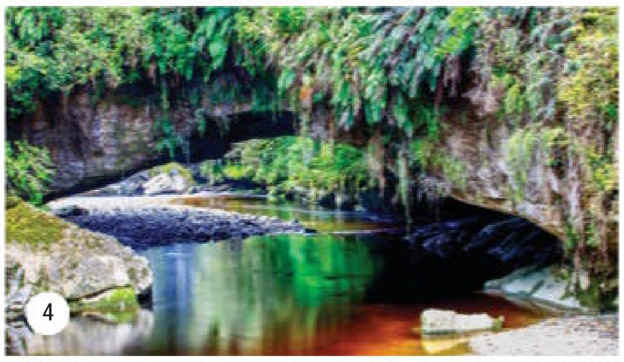
You can take the 15-minute shorter option to the seal colony viewpoint. This section is wheelchair and buggy friendly. Enjoy information panels along the way telling stories of the area. You can also extend the walk by an additional one hour that takes you to Cape Foulwind lighthouse.

Cape Foulwind was named by Captain James Cook in 1770 after his vessel was blown off course by the prevailing westerly winds. Because of the exposed nature of the track and rapidly changing weather be sure to bring appropriate warm layers and a waterproof jacket.

Kumara area: Goldsborough short walks

These walks start from the Goldsborough campsite which is the site of an old gold-mining town. Explore the gold-mining area with two loop tracks of either 20 or 90 minutes and try your luck fossicking for gold in the nearby creek.

The town was once thriving with over 6000 people all searching for gold. Today the town is gone but the gold has not. You can explore the old gold workings, and one of the tracks starts and ends via miners' race tunnels.



Karamea area: Ōpārara Basin – Moria Gate and Mirror Tarn Loop

Discover a beautiful limestone arch and spectacular rainforest reflections on this short walk that the whole family will love.

The one-hour-30-minute loop passes through original old-growth rain forest, featuring kahikatea, rimu and moss-covered trees. Arrive at the Moria Gate arch, named in 1984 after the gate in The Lord of the Rings trilogy. Explore underneath the arch via a short side track to view the naturally sculptured limestone and maybe spot a native blue duck/whio feeding in the whisky-coloured waters of the Ōpārara River. Further along at Mirror Tarn you'll find spectacular reflections of the surrounding rainforest.

Look out for other native species such as the giant land snails (powelliphanta), bush robins/kakaruai, weka and, if you are lucky, kākā.

Reefton area: Reefton short walks

Reefton is a great place to base yourself and your family. You can find a range of interesting 15-minute to one-hour walks accessed within 15-minutes' drive of Reefton.

Explore the Alborns Coal Mine Track with its old coal mine workings, remains of makeshift winch equipment and great views over the ranges. Or try the wheelchair and buggy-friendly Tawhai walk through beech/exotic forest. You could also try the Golden Fleece walk which follows a creek and ends at the Blacks Point Museum. There's also a longer walk option on the Kirwans Track that starts from the old town site of Capleston and passes through a tunnel and across a swing-bridge.

Franz Josef Glacier area: Kā Roimata o Hine Hukatere, Peters Pool and Sentinel Rock Walks

A short distance from the Franz Josef Waiau township, at the end of the Glacier Access Road is the starting point for several stunning short walks. You can take the Kā Roimata o Hine Hukatere Walk for half an hour winding gently through rainforest to a Franz Josef glacier viewpoint. As the glacier retreats this is a good location to see the landscape left behind by the ice and understand the natural forces at work.

You could also turn off the main Hukatere track and take the 20-minute short steady climb up Sentinel Rock. This offers the most impressive views of the glacier and the Waiho River. Another short-walk option is a 25-minute return wheelchair and buggy-friendly track to Peters Pool. Enjoy amazing reflective views of the glacier valley and mountains. This small kettle lake was formed by ice melting amongst glacial moraine about 200 years ago.

Punakaiki area: Pancake Rocks and Blowholes Walk

Explore a limestone landscape of pancake shaped rock formations, blowholes and surge pools on this short, paved walk. This walk is all-weather friendly and with the exception of an optional short section with steps, it is suitable for wheelchairs and buggies.

Enjoy amazing coastal views and forest, rich birdlife, and spectacular geological features on this short 20-minute loop at Dolomite Point in Punakaiki.

Fox Glacier area: Lake Matheson/ Te Ara Kairaumati Walk

This is a gentle walk around Lake Matheson. You can choose to walk 45-minutes return to the jetty viewpoint which is also wheelchair and buggy friendly or complete the full one-hour-30-minute lake circuit.

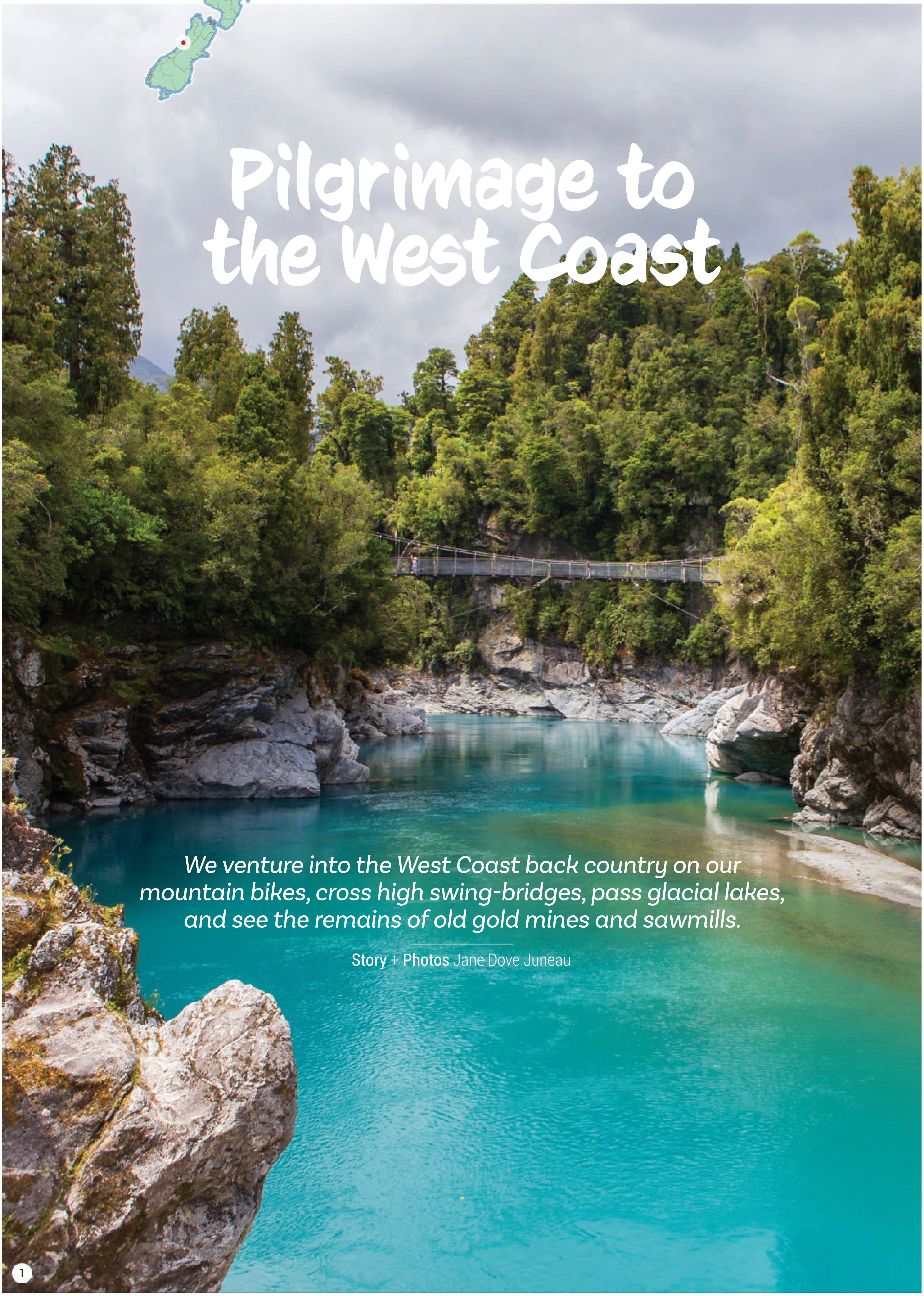
Lake Matheson is nestled in ancient forest and is famous for mirror views of Aoraki/Mount Cook and Mount Tasman. Its excellent reflecting properties are due to the dark brown colour of the water, the result of organic matter leached from the humus of the forest floor. Dawn and dusk are the best times to enjoy the reflections in the lake. Lake Matheson was formed when Fox Glacier Te Moeka o Tuawe retreated from its last significant advance about 14,000 years ago.

The species most likely to be seen here is the long-finned eel, which made this an important food-gathering site (mahinga kai) for Māori travelling along the coast.

TUNNEL CLOSED ON TUNNEL TERRACE WALK

Tunnel No.1 on the Tunnel Terrace Walk, located closest to the carpark, is closed due to rockfall. The walking track remains open with a temporary detour in place. The starting point of the walk is Tunnel No. 2, 100 metres along the road, east of the carpark. Respect and follow all signage that is in place for your safety.

1. Franz Joseph viewpoint from Sentinel Rock – Ruth McKie CCBY-2.0
2. Brunner Mine wagon – Ruth McKie CCBY-2.0
3. Cape Foulwind lighthouse – Richard Rossiter CCBY-2.0
4. Moria Gate – Richard Rossiter CCBY-2.0
5. Pancake rocks – Ruth McKie CCBY-2.0



Pilgrimage to the West Coast

We venture into the West Coast back country on our mountain bikes, cross high swing-bridges, pass glacial lakes, and see the remains of old gold mines and sawmills.

Story + **Photos** Jane Dove Juneau

WEST COAST WILDERNESS TRAIL
Ross
#westcoastwildernesstrail
www.westcoastwildernesstrail.co.nz

2

3

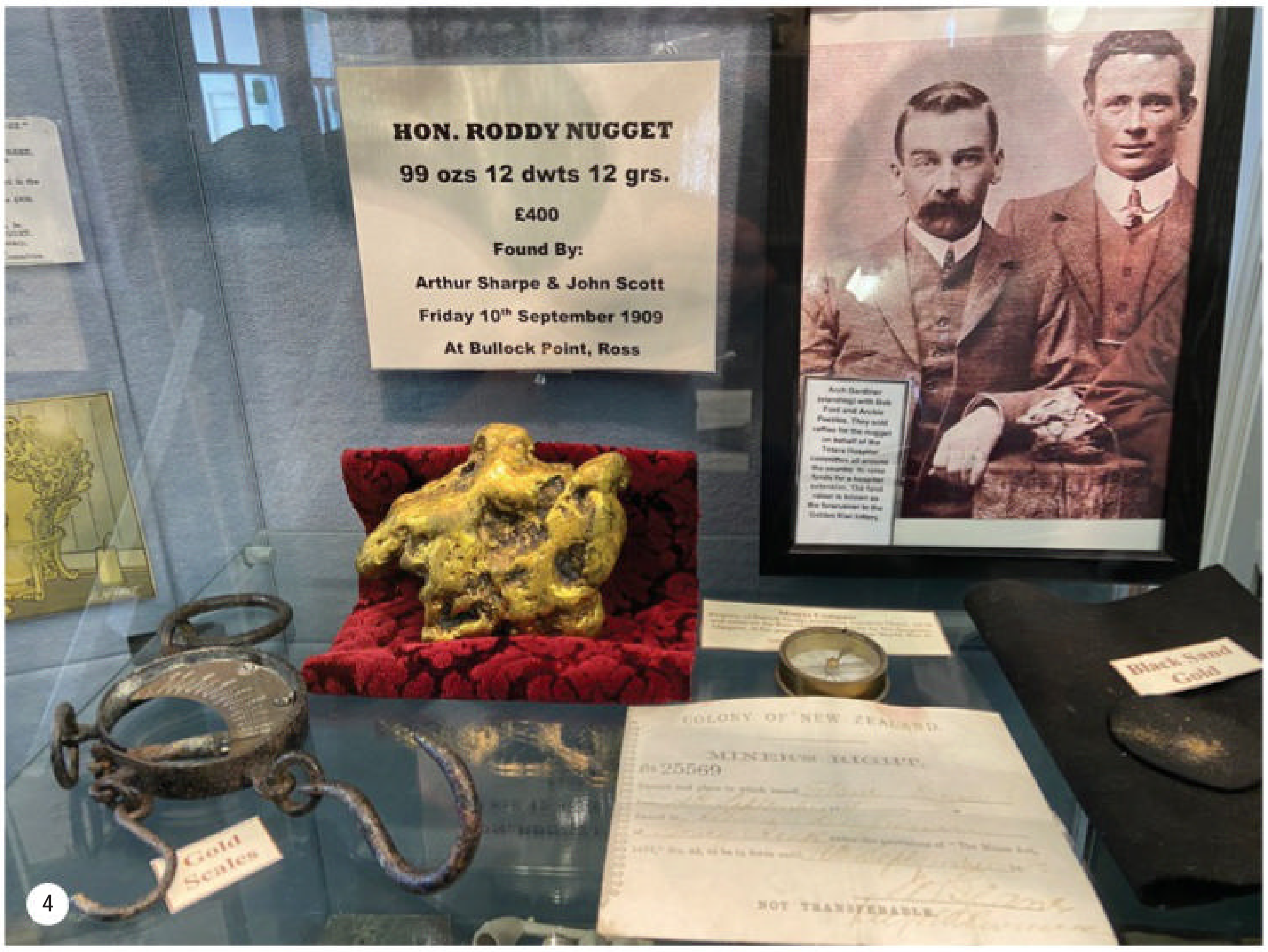
My mother used to say "you can tell your father is a West Coaster because when there's rain in the air he runs around putting away all the tools, and secures the place like there's going to be rain for days." Bill Dove was born in Hokitika and grew up on a farm by Hou Hou Creek just north of Hoki (as he called it). My grandfather Will Dove farmed during the depression and supplemented the family income by panning for gold and working in timber mills. Going back one more generation, our great-grandfather William Dove arrived in Hokitika from Newbury, England, and found work initially in Kumara then in Ross with Ross United Mining Company. But sadly, at 30 years old he was killed in a mining accident before his son Will was born. I have the West Coast in my blood so it's not surprising I was drawn to live by the wild coast of Taranaki. The trip to Hokitika to ride the Wilderness Trail is a pilgrimage back to the Dove family roots.

The 133km West Coast Wilderness Trail goes from Ross to Hokitika before turning inland to Lake Kaniere and up into the Arahura Valley by Milltown, then back down to Greymouth via Kumara. Several friends have ridden it and enjoyed the variety of terrain on the trail. The grade 2 ride is not too technical – as, after much debate, my partner Rick and I have just bought electric mountain bikes and we don't want to end up in a ditch. We'll leave the grade 3–5 rides to the younger riders. The logistics of the ride involve shuttles and accommodation, as most people ride it over four days, but it can be ridden in two or three days, or even one. We decide to leave from Ross, and park our camper in Hokitika where we will spend our first night.

To reach our transfer to Ross from the NZMCA campground in Hokitika we must cross the long Hokitika Bridge. I let out a squawk in terror as a couple of large trucks thunder by me shaking the bridge as I carefully navigate the narrow pedestrian path. "Don't wobble", I coach myself. Safely over the river we find the Wilderness Trail Shuttle headquarters and an impressive array of mountain bikes on racks in the large warehouse. A friendly 'Swiwi' or Swiss Kiwi greets us as our bikes are loaded onto a trailer ready to take us to Ross. We join a family group from Christchurch/Wellington (who all look fit and streamlined like seasoned riders) and a chap from the United States, to listen to the briefing for the day's ride.

We load into the minivan and I end up in the front seat by the driver Dwayne, who keeps us entertained on the drive south to Ross. "You have to be dead to get the best views around here," says Dwayne as we drive into Ross. He seems to be right, as perched

1. A peaceful moment overlooking the Hokitika Gorge **2.** Rick and me at the start of our ride **3.** Rick rides over the Tōtara River Bridge **4.** A replica of New Zealand's largest gold nugget found at Ross **5.** Great-granddaughter Jane by William Dove's headstone at Ross


HON. RODDY NUGGET
99 ozs 12 dwts 12 grs.
£400
Found By:
Arthur Sharpe & John Scott
Friday 10th September 1909
At Bullock Point, Ross
Black Sand Gold
Gold Scales
COLONY OF NEW ZEALAND
MINER'S RIGHT
NOT TRANSFERABLE

4

WILLIAM DOVE

5

6

7

up on a hilltop cemetery just north of town, overlooking the Tōtara River and the distant ocean, I find my great-grandfather's beautifully restored headstone. William Dove accidently killed July 19, 1884, when he fell down a mineshaft. And here he rests on a peaceful hilltop, visited 139 years later by a great-granddaughter. In the centre of town is an even earlier cemetery that also sits high on a hilltop with commanding views over Ross.

Aside from hilltop burial grounds Ross has a colourful history. The most notable being the discovery of New Zealand's largest gold nugget 3.09kg (99.63 ounces), which seems to have since mysteriously disappeared. The fist-sized nugget was found by Arthur Sharpe and John Scott in 1909, a couple of rugby fields away from here according to Rick Tennell, local historian at the Goldfields Information and Heritage Centre. The 'Honourable Roddy' nugget named after Minister of Mines Roderick McKenzie was bought by the government and given to King George as a 'decidedly handsome' Coronation gift. The story goes that the nugget was melted down to make a gilded tea service, which is on display at the Tower of London, but strangely the tea service is not on display and has not been found. If you want to try panning for gold, or learn more about the history of Ross, stop in at the Goldfields Information Centre.

Below the Heritage Centre is an old open-cast mine now transformed into a lake with a Chinese garden to commemorate the early Chinese miners who worked in Ross. In its heyday in the 1860s Ross had 2500 inhabitants,

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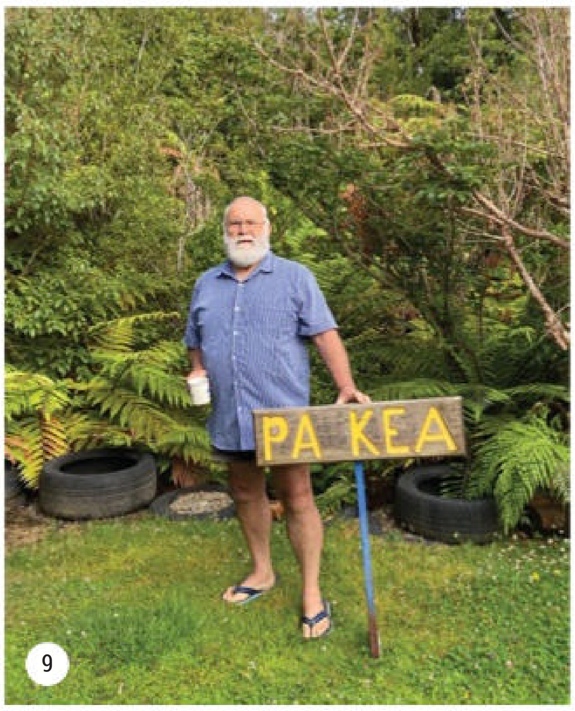
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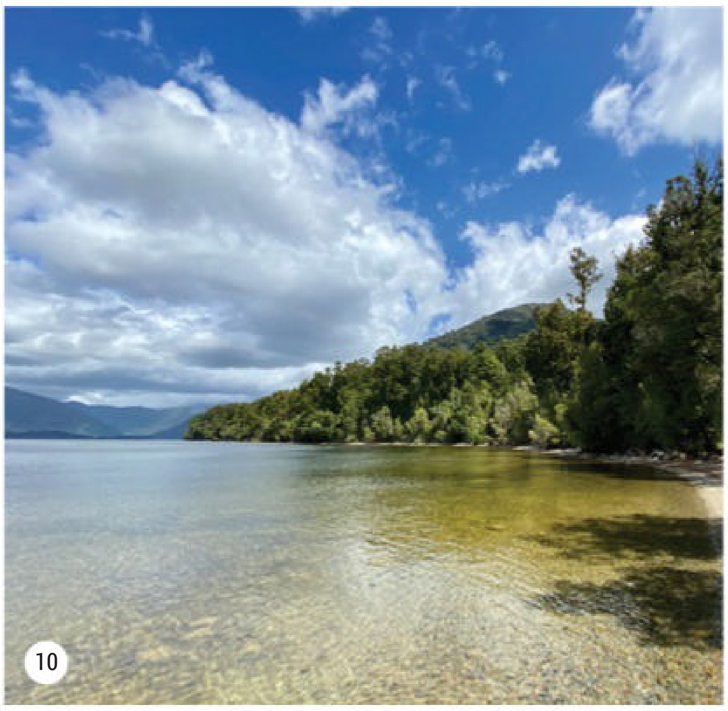
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but now a peaceful country town it has 450 residents. There has been speculation that the town is literally sitting on a goldmine and that beneath Ross could be gold reserves worth $3 billion. But to access the gold would require moving the town or mining beneath it. There has been interest from Birchfield and a Canadian firm that holds the paperwork for the claim, with mixed reaction to the idea, but to date no mining permit has been granted.

Time to get on our bikes as we have many miles to ride. Dwayne takes a photo of us by the sign for the end of the Wilderness Trail, which is ironic, but like the rest of our group we are riding the trail in reverse.

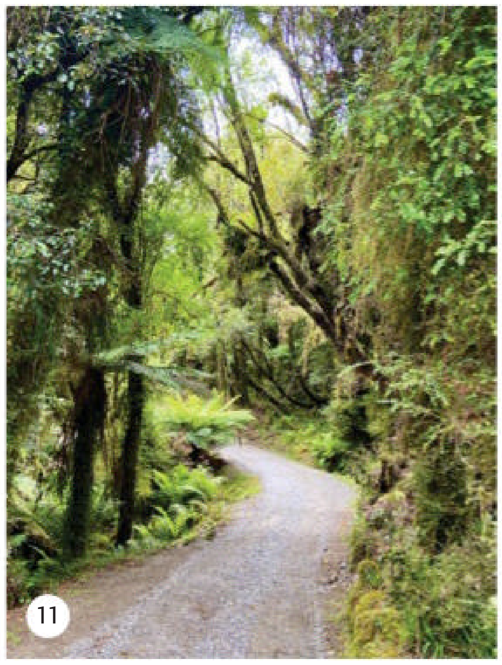
Our mission now is to follow the orange West Coast Wilderness Trail markers for the next 133km. We get off to a good start heading out of town and I watch Rick ride off down to the beach in the distance, past the first large signpost directing us down the old Hokitika–Ross railway line. Rick arrives back not sure how he missed the large sign, as I chuckle to myself. We cross the Tōtara Lagoon, and on one of the many informational boards along the ride, we read and see photos of the early train that serviced the sawmilling and farming community.

The trail leads around the inland side of Lake Mahinapua to the Treetops Walkway. As we arrive three people come flying down the zipline from the 45m tower, a mere 15 storeys above the forest floor. Looks an adrenalin pump but maybe not for me today. The treetop walk, although seeming more sedate, wanders among the podocarp forest 20 metres above the ground. It isn't too hard to imagine life as a bird in the treetops, except for the young humans talking loudly nearby. We climb in circles around the tower to the top to enjoy views of the Southern Alps and down to Lake Mahinapua in the west. I confirm my decision having no desire to jump out of the tower to plunge down the zipline. Instead we walk out on the cantilever bridge, listening to the wind blow through the trees and swaying like a bird on a treetop.

After life as birds, we are on our bikes again, pedalling along forest tracks down to the wetlands of Lake Mahinapua. The track doesn't have lake views, but there is a 30-minute return walk to the lake for those who are energetic.

Back at Hokitika with the first day complete we end up riding about 40km. The next leg is to Lake Kaniere where we'll be staying by the lake at a homestay. There is an option to have a bag dropped off at our accommodation by the Wilderness Trail Shuttle (who donate $3 back to the trail – $18,000 was raised last year)

6. The cantilever bridge swings in the treetops overlooking Lake Mahinapua **7.** Lake Mahinapua once was a main transport route for early settlers **8.** The tannin-coloured water in West Coast streams is stained brown from forest vegetation **9.** Grant Hinchliff directs us where to put our bikes **10.** Lake Kaniere sits in an old glacial valley **11.** A typical section of the well-maintained Wilderness Trail **12.** We have a greenstone rock my grandfather found in the Arahura River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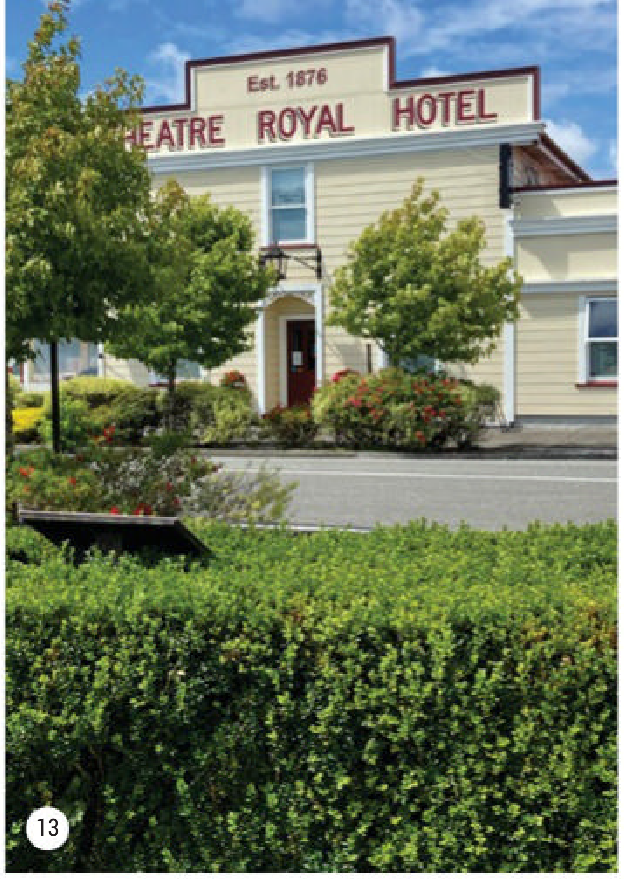
Photos by: Shakey Finger Photography

or any of the other trail transfer companies, but we are carrying our own gear. Rick has a bag attached to his bike with panniers and I have a small backpack. Travel light is my motto. We have rain jackets, a warm layer of merino, along with a freeze-dried hiking dinner, a can of tuna and crackers for lunch and a bag of scroggin (dried fruit, nuts, etc.) each.

The ride up to Lake Kaniere follows the Hokitika River, and then up past Hurunui Jacks to follow alongside the original wooden Lake Kaniere Water Race built to supply local mining operations. The track is narrow in places with the water quietly flowing down the fern-lined bank of the water race while the other side is lined in tree ferns but drops away. Next moment I see Rick wobble and disappear off the side. Held up by a small tree fern but pinned under his bike is Rick. My attempt to lift his e-bike is not very successful as it's too heavy. He manages to scramble up with a little blood to show from my attempt to help. Thank goodness he's durable. The weight of the panniers threw his balance out. Rick is off again pedalling fast, and before long the forest track opens out to a view of the glacial Lake Kaniere. Surrounded by tall rimu and kahikatea forest the deep lake is nestled in the among the mountains, with the Southern Alps beyond.



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We pedal around the lake to find our home for the night. With a cheerful smile Grant Hinchliff greets us at Lake Kaniere Homestay, gesturing to his Pa Kea sign. Obligingly we hook our bike seats under a wire that runs between two deck posts in his inventive bike stand. Grant gives us a tour of his three-storey wooden Scandinavian-style Fraemohs house. Our room on the third level has views through the trees out to the lake, like staying in a cosy tree house, with shiny polished floors.

"Do you want a beer or a whisky?" Grant calls out, "or beer with a whisky chaser." We'd just returned from an impromptu tour up to Dorothy Falls in Grants electric car.

"Don't mind if I do," I say. Well that's a surprise. We didn't bring any beer as it didn't fit into the travel light philosophy, but after a hot day in the saddle, and a swim in Lake Kaniere, what could be better? Soon the stories begin to flow as Grant gives us a West Coaster's perspective on the world.

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The next morning after cereal and Vogel's toast we farewell our generous host and began our 51km leg to the gold-mining town of Kumara via Arahura Valley and Milltown. The trail follows the Arahura Valley through fields of healthy black dry stock and several large bulls. Rick stops to look at the bulls and one is stomping its foot. With that I'm off down the road at speed. After crossing the Arahura River we ride up a series of roller-coaster S-bends through horopito bushes and foxgloves, stopping at a picnic table where a guttural sounding weka walks by to investigate. In a flurry of wings two kererū fly by into the forest. The trail wanders through a lush section of forest before passing the ghost town of Cowboy Paradise. This is an option to stay overnight, but the prices didn't suit our budget and due to staff shortages the bar/food service wasn't open unless you were a guest. We soon cross a swing-bridge spanning a deep valley with breathtaking views to the stream below. The trail continues down past Kapitea Reservoir to Kumara where we catch up with other riders in the Theatre Royal Hotel garden bar. We stay at the Undertaker's Cottage, originally the home of Henry and Jane Johnsen and their seven children in the late 1800s. The coffins were all made on site in a narrow shed in front of the house. Many of the old historic buildings in Kumara have been restored, and billboards with the colourful history of Kumara make interesting reading. After an excellent dinner at the historic Theatre Royal we have a ghost-free night in the cottage.

The remaining section of the ride is 29km to Greymouth. The ride follows the coast to the breakwater at the mouth of the Grey River then around the fishing wharfs into town. After a delicious lunch at a local café we find the Wilderness Trail Shuttle office for our ride back to Hokitika. Here we meet Lynette O'Connor and Sarah Ellington who are both Olympic medallists working for the bike rental/shuttle company. Lynette, now a keen mountain-bike rider, trains for the Coast-to-Coast on the shared-use Paparoa Track, New Zealand's latest Great Walk, which includes the Pike29 Memorial Track, a side track to the site of the former Pike River Mine. The Wilderness Trail Shuttle also operates Paparoa shuttles to transfer riders or walkers to the start of the Paparoa Trail.

Back in Hokitika we take a side trip up to the turquoise waters of the Hokitika gorge, and later explore the variety of greenstone, glassblowing, and merino wool shops in town. I sample whitebait fritters and Rick has South African fried bread with curry – both delicious. Reflecting on the ride, I was very impressed with the quality of the track on the Wilderness Trail, developed by both the Grey and Westland District Councils. The Wilderness Trail Trust works alongside the councils to promote, develop and manage the trail. The trail is a huge success, bringing visitors to the area, and breathing new life into the country towns like Ross and Kumara. The ride offers a mixed interactional experience of the outdoors along with an opportunity to learn about our pioneering history of gold mines, view the remains of timber mills, old railway routes, and early New Zealand architecture in Ross and Kumara. I loved the old photographs bringing history to life on the information boards. And I had the chance to connect with my family history and see the final resting place of my great-grandfather in Ross.

13. The Theatre Royal Hotel in Kumara has been trading since 1876 **14.** Greymouth is the northern end of the Wilderness Trail **15.** An early photograph of Greymouth residents out biking **16.** The Undertaker's Cottage is one of a number of restored historical buildings in Kumara

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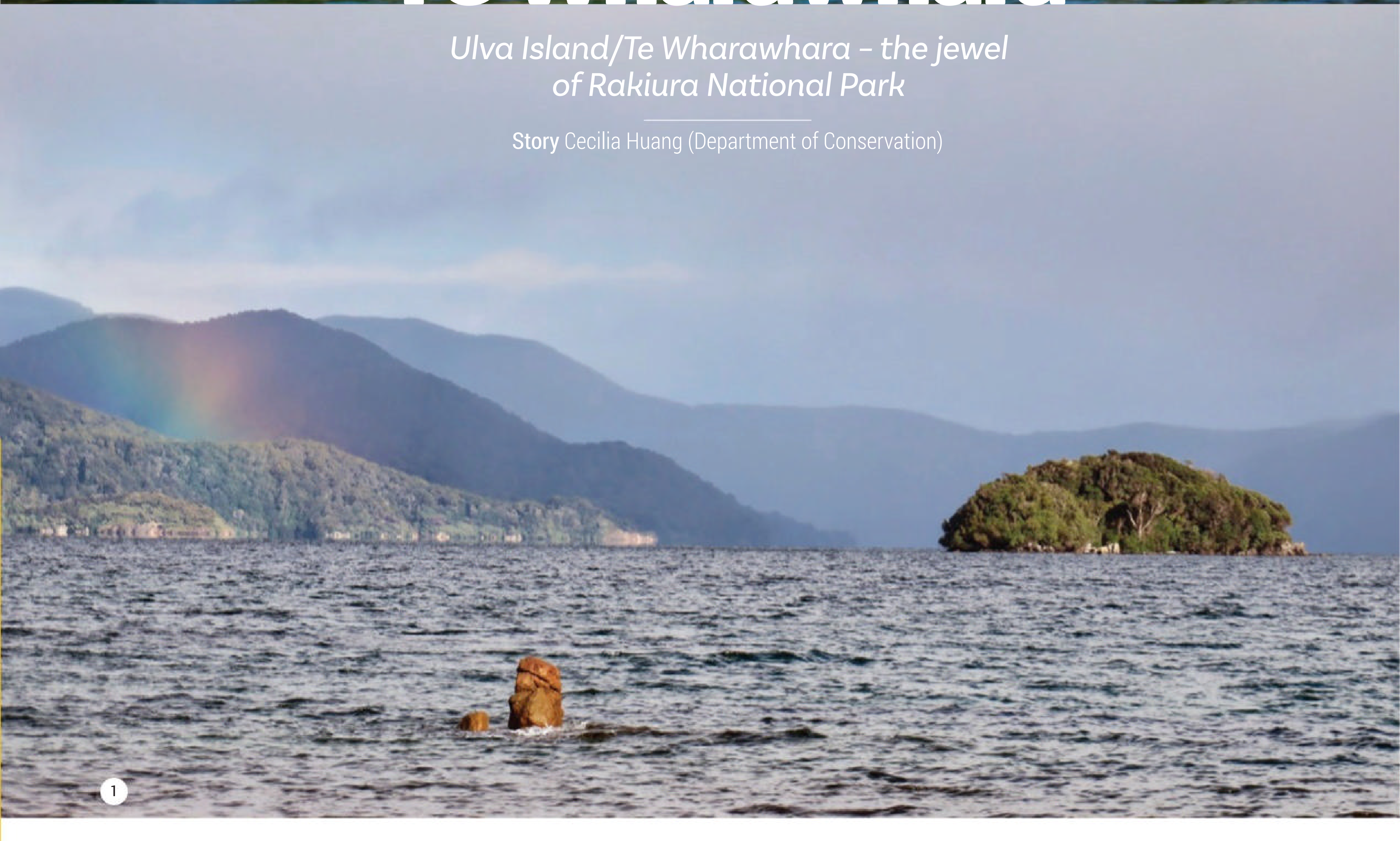
Ulva Island/ Te Wharawhara

Ulva Island/Te Wharawhara – the jewel of Rakiura National Park

Story Cecilia Huang (Department of Conservation)



A 10-minute boat ride from Stewart Island/Rakiura across Paterson Inlet/Whaka a Te Wera sits Ulva Island/Te Wharawhara. It is one of the few island sanctuaries in Aotearoa New Zealand that's open to the public.

History

Ngāi Tahu has had a long presence in Ulva Island/Te Wharawhara and Paterson Inlet dating back before Europeans arrived. Settlements like The Neck/Te Wehe a Te Wera were visited by Ngāi Tahu Māori as part of their food-gathering trips and later housed the first Stewart Island post office.

In 1872 Charles Traill established a post office in Post Office Bay, which was in operation until 1923. Charles and his brother Walter, both Orkney Islanders, established an extensive garden which included radiata pine and other exotic tree species. Some large survivors of their garden are still growing alongside the native forest trees on the northern edge of the island.

In the 1880s the Tourist Department provided funding for the island's tracks. In 1899 the island became one of New Zealand's first reserves, and in 1922 it became the country's first scenic reserve. Traill's seven-hectare homestead is still in private ownership today, while the remaining 259 hectares are looked after by many people, including the Department of Conservation, Ulva Island Charitable Trust, and the Hunter family.

Biodiversity

The island is renowned for its diverse and abundant birdlife. Weka, New Zealand's native woodhen, South Island kākā, kākāriki, kererū/wood pigeon, korimako/bellbird, pīpipi/brown creeper, miromiro/tomtit, pīwakawaka/fantail, tūī, tīeke/saddleback, mohua/yellowhead, toutouwai/Stewart Island robin and tītitipounamu/rifleman are present on Ulva Island. Some visitors may even be lucky enough to glimpse the Stewart Island tokoeka/brown kiwi. You'll have the best chance of seeing birds by being patient, quiet and moving slowly through the bush, being present in the moment and aware of your surroundings.

The island's forest is a typical southern New Zealand podocarp mix dominated by rimu, southern rātā and kāmahi, with associated stands of Hall's tōtara and miro. The bright scarlet flowers of rātā create a distinctive splash of colour on the island during the summer. Rimu is the tallest of the island's native trees, emerging high above the forest canopy. It's worth noting that this forest is a highly intact example of its type and how forest like this would have appeared before the introduction of any herbivore pests – there have never been any possums on the island.

Ulva was a central point in Paterson Inlet/Whaka a Te Wera, and Traill would alert the scattered communities around the inlet to the arrival of the mail boat by raising a flag. The post office meant that Ulva Island became a social meeting place for locals, who would dress in their finest clothes to pick up mail and hear news from their neighbours. The old post office (the first in the Stewart Island/Rakiura region) behind the privately owned houses near the landing is barely visible now.

2

Ulva Island/Te Wharawhara Marine Reserve

Managed by the Department of Conservation, the marine reserve covers 1075 hectares, or about 15 per cent of Paterson Inlet/Whaka a Te Wera adjoining Ulva Island. All marine life is fully protected in the marine reserve and any type of fishing is prohibited.

The inlet nurtures a rich range of plants and animals, because there is very little sediment or nutrient run-off in the waters flowing into it. This lack of sedimentation has created a unique environment where many species that don't usually live on sandy ground, including kina, sea cucumbers, starfish and brachiopods, are equally at home on sandy inlet floors as on rocky reefs.

The inlet is an important habitat and nursery for more than 45 species of fish. It also

TO HELP KEEP ULVA ISLAND PREDATOR FREE PLEASE CHECK YOU ARE PEST-FREE!

Protect Aotearoa/New Zealand wildlife

- Check – your gear, boat/kayak and packs for pests such as rodents and insects
- Clean – footwear and gear, removing soil and seeds
- Close – ensure your gear is zipped up (no open bags)

Unfortunately rats have recently been detected on the island and DOC is working to remove them. It's still critical that visitors follow the biosecurity advice and actions above to help keep further pests off the island. If you see evidence of rats or other pests on Ulva Island, please report it immediately to the Department of Conservation's hotline 0800 DOCHOT (0800 362 468).

ESSENTIAL NOTES

- Be mindful of wildlife, particularly around coastal areas. Keep our wildlife safe by always keeping at least 20 metres away.
- Never attempt to touch seals or sea lions – they can be aggressive and often carry diseases. For more information on how to have an enjoyable and safe encounter with our marine mammals visit www.doc.govt.nz
- Keep food to yourself as human foods are harmful to wildlife.
- Dogs are not allowed on the island. Night visits are not allowed.
- Camping is not allowed and there is no public accommodation on the island.
- Take all your rubbish with you when you leave. There are no rubbish bins.
- Do not play any bird calls/songs. This disturbs and stresses the birds.
- Drone use is not allowed above Ulva Island unless you have a drone permit. For more information, visit www.doc.govt.nz
- Follow all signs and keep to the paths.

has more varieties of seaweed than anywhere else in Aotearoa New Zealand, as well as other interesting species such as the living fossils called brachiopods.

Rāpoka/whakahao/sea lions and hoiho/yellow-eyed penguins are relatively established in the inlet, and both species breed and nest (respectively) on land around the edges of the inlet or the islands in it. Occasionally you may spot whales that visit the inlet and you might come across leopard seals and elephant seals on the beaches. You may also be lucky enough to see common dolphins and orca but these are less frequent.

Walking Tracks

There are well-formed tracks that cater to all ages and levels of fitness. It takes around three hours to walk all of the marked tracks, if you're up for it.

Flagstaff Point Lookout is a short walk that takes visitors up steps to a lookout with panoramic views back to Stewart Island/Rakiura. A flagstaff was erected here by postmaster Charles Traill so he could signal to residents of Paterson Inlet/Whaka a Te Wera when the mail boat arrived from Bluff. Visitors can choose to descend and return via Sydney Cove. Another short walk leads to a golden sand beach where you can look out onto part of the Ulva Island/Te Wharawhara Marine Reserve.

Walking along the beach, you'll find another track leading to the four-way junction that links Sydney Cove with tracks to Boulder Beach, West End Beach and back to Post Office Bay.

1. View from Ulva Island – credit: DOC, Crown Copyright, CC-BY **2.** Miromiro/tomtit from Ulva Island – credit: DOC, Crown Copyright, CC-BY **3.** Korimako/bellbird from Ulva Island – credit: Nir Ketraru **4.** Mohua/yellowhead from Ulva Island – credit: David Cook Wildlife Photography

FUN FACTS

Brachiopods or lamp shells are the most ancient of filter-feeding shellfish. They were abundant in prehistoric oceans at the dawn of life 300 to 550 million years ago. Today their fossils are common, but living examples are comparatively rare. Paterson Inlet/Whaka a Te Wera is home to brachiopod species that live both on rock and sediment, thriving at depths of less than 20 metres. This makes the inlet one of the richest and most accessible brachiopod habitats in the world.

Boulder Beach, takes its name from the two massive boulders now hidden in the forest covering the southern ridge above. A track from its northern end leads to the West End Beach and it takes around three hours in total to walk back to the Post Office Bay.

In addition to the walking tracks, water activities such as snorkelling, diving, kayaking and swimming are also popular.

5. Variable oystercatcher and gull from Ulva Island – credit: DOC, Crown Copyright, CC-BY **6.** Stewart Island robin – credit: DOC, Crown copyright, CC-BY

The Ulva Island Charitable Trust, a community volunteer group dedicated to providing a refuge for endangered species in the sanctuary, is helping to restore the island. The trust raises and manages funds to assist DOC to upgrade tracks and visitor facilities on Ulva Island and help keep it free of introduced pests and predators. For more information on how to get involved, visit www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/volunteer or www.ulvaisland.org

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GEORGE BEGG FESTIVAL

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The George Begg Festival is a multi-day, multi-location celebration. At the track you'll find the best in classic racing alongside fun for the whole whānau, including a retail precinct, live music and entertainment including festival headliners The Beat Girls, food and fizz including Begg's Bar (complete with nostalgic Pimms cart), a Kids Zone, and a retro beauty parlour.

Take part in Begg's Barmy Rally – a scavenger hunt through Southland in support of charity Cure Kids – and kick things off in style at Studio GB: the retro discotheque held at Bill Richardson Transport World.

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Hokitika's annual Wildfoods Festival

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Hokitika's annual Wildfoods Festival is a celebration of the West Coast's unique wild food and lifestyle, accompanied by premier entertainment. Visitors can sample a wide array of local natural foods, ranging from some of the weirdest and most exotic delicacies to fabulous gourmet specialties. What's traditionally found in the heart of the bush and deep in the ocean is served up with a fork for the daring. Apart from hunting the mountains for pigs, deer, thar and chamois and fishing the sea, keen stallholders have not left many stones unturned in their efforts to explore edible possibilities. Even garden weeds have been discovered as herbs useful in festival salads and beverages.

FERAL BEAUTY

The festival first came into fruition in 1990 when Hokitika local, Claire Bryant, instigated the very first celebration of local wild foods. Her wine cellar was very well stocked with a home brew of West Coast gorse flower wine and people were clamouring for a taste of her rose petal brew.

So … why not a festival celebrating the tastes of the wild West Coast!

The first event also coincided with the 125th anniversary celebration of the birth of Hokitika in March 1865.

Locals and the rest of New Zealand were captured by the magic of the idea – a celebration of Hokitika and the wild foods of the West Coast.

As for entertainment, the 2023 festival has a stellar line-up headed by hall of fame legend Sir Dave Dobbyn. Other Kiwi class acts include Zed, Greg Johnson and Cassie Henderson.

Those with a creative flair can enter Feral Fashion – a wearable-arts-style competition modelled on the racing circuits Fashion in the Field. Contestants get creative, forage in their surroundings, and create a wild alter ego to wear to the festival.

If children are not interested in sampling huhu grubs, the Kids Corner will keep them occupied with face painting, a massive inflatable pirate ship, a candy shop and more. Tickets for the upcoming festival are currently on sale through Eventfinda.

Further information including merchandise, travel and accommodation can be found at wildfoods.co.nz.

DESTINATION WESTLAND
DESTINATION WESTLAND

Your West Coast Holiday Starts Here At Hokitika's Kiwi Holiday Park And Motels

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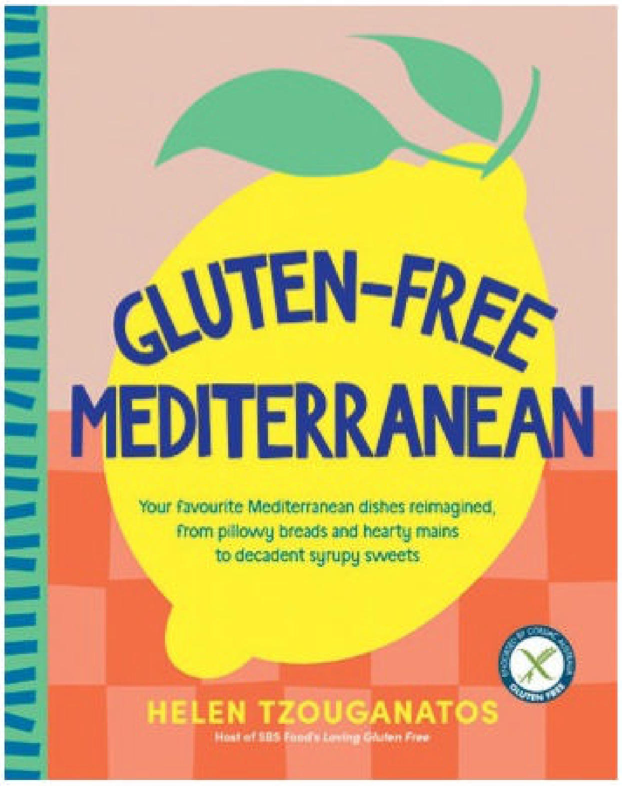
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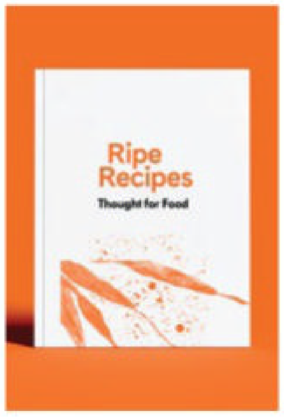


WINNER ROAD KAI VOL 19
H Bates
Napier

Chicken Meatballs

Serves 4-6

light olive oil, for shallow-frying
Tzatziki and lemon wedges, to serve
CHICKEN MEATBALLS
500 g chicken mince
1 all-purpose potato (such as sebago), peeled and very finely grated, excess moisture squeezed out
1 small red onion, grated, excess moisture squeezed out
2 garlic cloves, finely grated
1 egg
handful of flat-leaf parsley leaves, finely chopped, plus extra sprigs to serve
handful of mint leaves, finely chopped, plus extra sprigs to serve
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
1 teaspoon dried oregano
2 teaspoons ground cumin
generous pinch of sea salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper

These gorgeously juicy chicken meatballs taste lighter and sweeter than their beef counterparts – and this is why kids are obsessed with them. Meatballs require a starchy component to keep them light and fluffy, so I have swapped out breadcrumbs with finely grated potato to produce the lightest, fluffiest meatball you will ever taste. Beautifully seasoned with fresh herbs, lemon zest, dried oregano and cumin, a squeeze of lemon and a good smear of creamy tzatziki are all you need to finish.

Combine the chicken meatball ingredients in a large non-reactive bowl and mix well by hand. Refrigerate for 30 minutes to firm up, then roll the mixture into 16 balls. (I find it helpful to wet or oil my hands prior to rolling to stop the mince sticking to my fingers.)

Heat enough olive oil for shallow-frying in a large, deep frying pan until it reaches 180°C on a kitchen thermometer (or until a cube of gluten-free bread dropped in the hot oil browns in 15 seconds). Add the meatballs in batches and fry, turning regularly, for 5 minutes or until browned all over.
Remove from the pan and drain on paper towel. Serve with tzatziki, lemon wedges and extra herbs.

NOTE
These meatballs freeze really well, so you might like to double the batch, then portion and freeze your uncooked meatballs for up to 2 months. Thaw completely before cooking.

Oozy Vegan Pumpkin & Saffron Risotto Serves 4-6

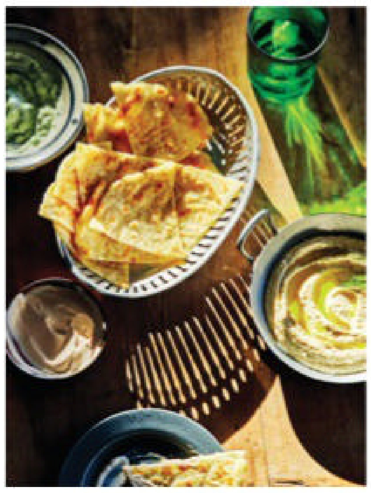
400 g butternut pumpkin, peeled and cut into 1.5 cm cubes
80 ml (⅓ cup) extra-virgin olive oil
sea salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper
875 ml (3 ½ cups) warm vegetable stock
1 onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
275 g (1 ¼ cups) arborio or carnaroli rice
pinch of saffron threads
125 ml (½ cup) white wine
crispy sage leaves, to serve (optional) (see Note)

Oozy is not a word you would normally associate with a risotto made without butter or cheese. The secret here is caramelised roasted pumpkin that is pureed to add a smooth, creamy texture and delicate sweetness to the risotto. Earthy, floral saffron complements the pumpkin's sweetness and produces a sunny, golden risotto. Ensure you use a short-grain high-starch rice, such as arborio or carnaroli, for that signature creamy texture. Preheat the oven to 180°C (fan-forced). Place 250g of the pumpkin in a roasting tin, drizzle in half the olive oil, add a pinch of salt and toss well. Roast for 30 minutes, tossing halfway through to ensure even browning. Transfer the pumpkin to a food processor, add 80ml (⅓ cup) of the stock and puree. Set aside.

Meanwhile, heat the remaining oil in a large frying pan over medium–low heat. Add the onion and a generous pinch of salt and cook for 5 minutes to soften. Stir in the garlic and cook for another 30 seconds. Add the remaining pumpkin, the rice and saffron and gently stir for a minute to toast the rice grains.

Deglaze the pan with the white wine, stirring to release any caramelised bits caught on the base, and simmer for a minute so the rice absorbs the wine. Add a few ladles of the remaining stock and bring to a gentle simmer. When the stock has been absorbed, add more to the pan, a few ladles at a time. Continue, gradually adding more stock as it is absorbed, and cook for 15 minutes or until the rice is al dente. In the last 2 minutes of simmering, gently fold in the pumpkin puree. Remove the pan from the heat and adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper as required. Ladle the risotto into shallow bowls and serve with crispy sage leaves scattered over the top, if desired.

NOTE
Crispy sage leaves: fry a handful of sage leaves in 3 tablespoons of olive oil over medium heat for 30 seconds or until crisp. Remove with a slotted spoon and sprinkle with salt.



Pita Bread makes 4

½ teaspoon caster sugar
1 teaspoon dried yeast
195 g (1 ½ cups) gluten-free plain flour
1 teaspoon sea salt flakes
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling

Traditionally, the way to start a meal at any Greek taverna is with soft warm pita bread accompanied by a medley of dips. My favourites are garlicky Tzatziki, because you can smear it on literally anything; salty Taramasalata, for its light and fluffy texture; Fava, for its distinctive creaminess; and Melitzanosalata, for its smoky eggplant notes. When dining out, I'm often served veggie sticks as a bread substitute, but what I really want is a soft pliable gluten-free bread to scoop up my dip like everyone else. Here is my easy recipe for pita, so you never have to miss out again.

Place the caster sugar, yeast and 180ml (⅓ cup) of lukewarm water in a jug and whisk to combine. Leave to stand for 10–15 minutes or until the mixture foams.

Place the flour in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the dough hook attachment and crush in the salt flakes with your fingers. Pour in the yeast mixture and olive oil and mix for about 1 minute to form a ball.

Transfer the dough to a large, greased bowl, cover with plastic wrap and rest in a warm spot for 1 hour or until the dough has doubled in size. (If you are making the dough ahead of time, it will keep in the fridge for up to 3 days.)

Divide the dough into four even portions and roll into balls. Working with one ball at a time, drizzle over a little olive oil and massage to coat. Place the dough between two sheets of baking paper and roll out to form a thin 20 cm round.

Heat a cast-iron frying pan over high heat and drizzle in a little olive oil. Remove the top layer of baking paper from the dough, then flip the round into the hot pan and peel away the remaining baking paper. Cook for 2-3 minutes Remove from the pan and cover with a tea towel to keep warm while you cook the rest.

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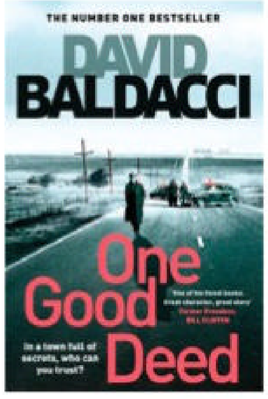

David Baldacci
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In 1949, Aloysius Archer arrives in the dusty southern town of Poca City. He has nothing but a handful of dollars, the clothes he's wearing and an appointment with his new parole officer. After his wartime experiences in Italy and a prison sentence for a crime he didn't commit, Archer is looking for a fresh start and a peaceful life.

Historic New Zealand Racing Cars 2

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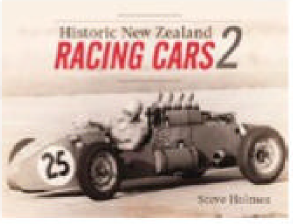

Historic New Zealand Racing Cars 2 returns with another fascinating collection of historic New Zealand racing cars, showcasing 18 more portraits of cars whose stories are intertwined with our motoring history. From Formula 1 Ferraris to the Formula 5000 Begg 018, and from New Zealand Specials to the DeKon Monza saloon cars, there's something here for every motor-racing enthusiast.

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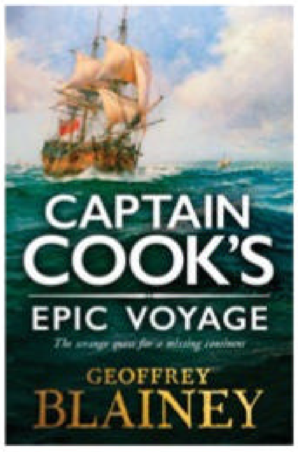

The story of the astonishing voyage of Captain James Cook and the *Endeavour*, to mark the 250th anniversary of that voyage, and Cook's claim to sovereignty.

Nine Lives Expeditions to Everest

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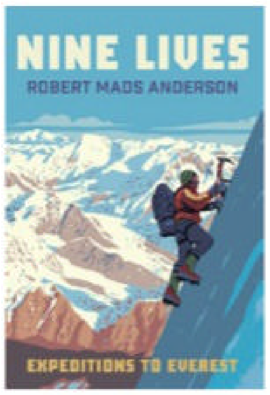

Robert Mads Anderson is an elite mountaineer with a solitary goal: to conquer Everest. After nearly getting killed on his first expedition, Anderson then led a team up a new route without oxygen or Sherpa support, climbed solo on the remote North Face to finally guide a team to the top of the world.

7 Dimensions: Children's Emotional Well-being

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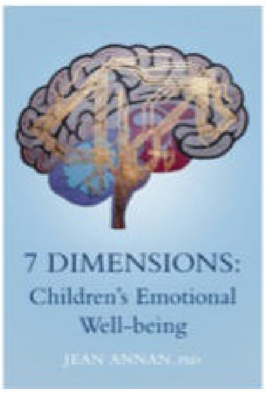
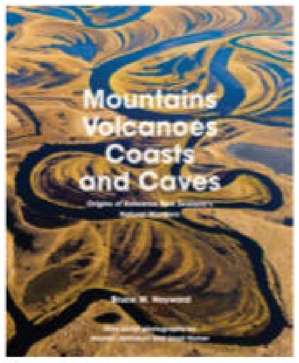


We all want the best for the children we nurture and teach. We want our children to know that they matter and that it is good to be them.
However, we are regularly bombarded by a sea of disparate and often-conflicting information about emotional well-being. Making decisions about supporting children can, at times, feel like guesswork. How do we recognise the key components of children's emotional experience?

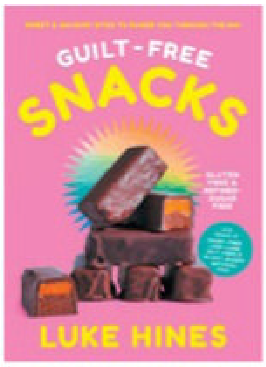
Mountains, Volcanoes, Coasts & Caves: Origins of Aotearoa New Zealand's Natural Wonders

Bruce W Hayward
RRP $69.99
Auckland University Press



From Whakaari / White Island and Huka Falls to the Moeraki Boulders and Milford Sound, Aotearoa New Zealand overflows with extraordinary landforms and other natural features.This is not a random quirk of nature, but a result of the unique and complex geological history of this part of planet Earth.

Guilt - Free Snacks

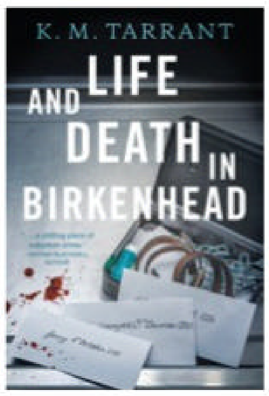


Luke Hines
RRP $26.99
Pan Macmillan

Learn how to snack well, with these 60 delicious new ideas for the sweet and savoury snacks that tick both the health and flavour boxes.

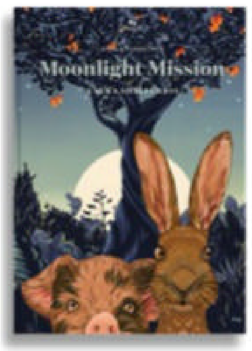
Life and Death in Birkenhead

K M Tarrant
RRP $35
Mary Egan Publishing



Within the small suburb of Birkenhead lurks a monster, one the local residents entrust with their recently departed loved ones. He has been inflicting his depraved atrocities unnoticed. But what happens when he turns his attentions to the living?

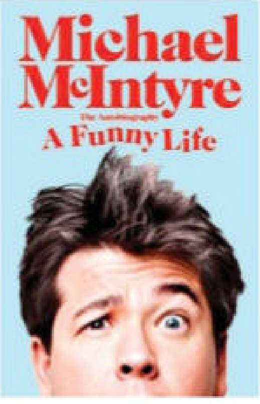
Moonlight Mission



Laura Shallcrass
RRP $30
Beatnik Publishing

Kunekune knows something is up, food is going missing.
Hare wants to mount a defence to protect the precious food that remains, but is that the right approach?
Sometimes the answer lies right next to the problem, and this community learns the power of coming together.

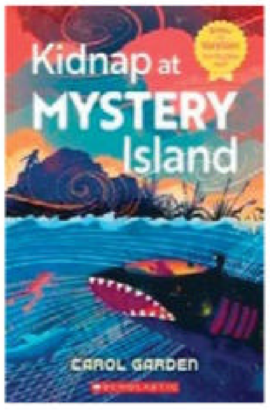
A Funny Life



Michael McIntyre
RRP $39.99
Pan Macmillan

In *A Funny Life*, Michael honestly and hilariously shares the highs and the lows of his rise to the top and desperate attempts to stay there. It's all here, from his disastrous panel show appearances to his hit TV shows, from mistakenly thinking he'd be a good chat show host and talent judge, to finding fame and fortune beyond his wildest dreams and becoming the biggest-selling comedian in the world.

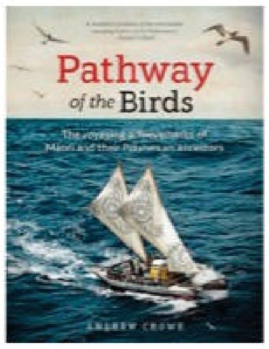
Kidnap at Mystery Island



Carol Garden
RRP $19.99
Scholastic

Life is high-tech and kids are born with super-powers. Dom is a human chameleon who has to choose between doing the right thing and protecting his family. Will he cross his terrifying father to save the girl that Dezi Krate has kidnapped?

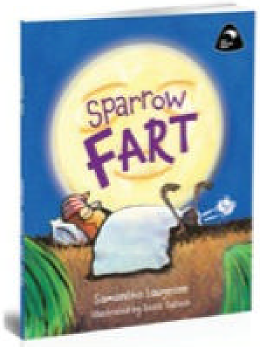
Pathway of the Birds



Andrew Crowe
RRP $49.99
Bateman Books

This book casts light on a neglected epoch of world history, one that saw Polynesians expand their territory across the world's largest ocean.

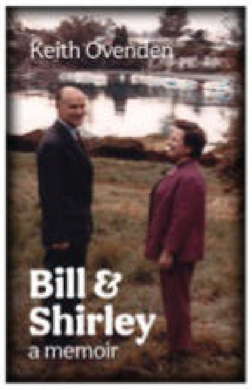
Sparrow Fart



Samantha Laugesen
RRP $19.95
Luke the Pook Press

Up at sparrow fart means waking very early in the morning, when it's so quiet you can hear the sparrows farting gently in their nests. But what DOES a sparrow fart sound like, exactly? Join Tom on his early morning adventure to find out!

Bill & Shirley: a memoir



Keith Ovenden
RRP $35
Massey Press

This wise, urbane memoir begins with the early years of Keith Ovenden's marriage to their only child, Helen Sutch, and carries through to Sutch's trial on charges brought against him under the Official Secrets Act, all the way to Shirley's death over 30 years later.

VOL 19 BOOK WINNERS

Lion Guards the Gate	P	Jackson	Blenheim
Slinky Malinkis Big Christmas	A	Douglas	Ngatea
Granny McFlitter the Knit before Christmas	J	Dudley	Portobello
The Cambridge Code	A	Forsyth	Pirongia
My Real Dog	N	Gow	Tauranga
Guardians of Aotearoa	R	Passey	Taupo
The Clarence	A	Barrie	Levin
Passion	N	Young	Whangarei
More Retro Caravans	M	Wilson	
Grandpa versus Swing	K	Murdie	Ohakune
Oscar Garden	R	Christensen	Feilding
Book-Marvellous Marvin	F	Wilkins	Kaiapoi
Book-Korora and the Sushi Shop	B	Love	Havelock North
Book-Mind Free	G	Simpson	
Book-Kidnap at Mystery Island	G	Leach	Papamoa
Book-Her Patient Fight	C	Howatson	Hawera
Book-Love America	T	Potts	Whangarei

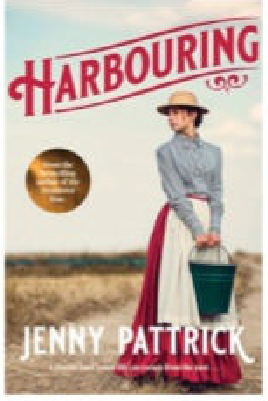
Mind Free: The breakthrough mindful self-hypnosis method

MIND
FREE
MARK STEPHENS

Mark Stephens
RRP $35
Murdoch Books

Ditch negative thoughts, smash procrastination, break bad habits, stress less, sleep well, live pain-free, overcome weight issues, fix your phobias and ease anxiety with *Mind Free*.

Harbouring

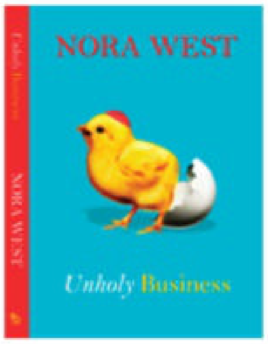


Jenny Pattrick
RRP $36
Penguin

Word came to me at the foundry. How the Colonel traced me, bless his boots, I never knew, but trace me he did. Boss appeared to me out of the din and fire and brimstone of the furnace room where I was shovelling the last of the day's spills into a pile for smelting tomorrow.

"Message for you, lad. Call at my office after you finish." That set me wondering. The wife? Gareth in trouble again? Baby sick, or worse? Messages don't come two a penny to the likes of a foundry worker.

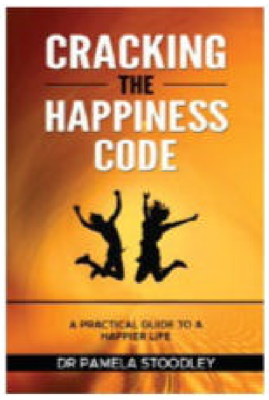
Unholy Business



Nora West
RRP $28
Korora Press

England in 1963. Alice is at boarding school in Sussex, Sylvia is drinking in her bedroom and Quentin is hatching plots to extend his poultry empire to Italy in cahoots with the Vatican. It is a year of family transitions and a summer trip to Rome… but will the chickens come home to roost?

Cracking the Happiness Code



Dr Pamela Stoodley
RRP $ 29.99
Jane Publishing

The 'HOW' of the book gives you practical steps to change your thoughts and routines to create a mind that is in your control – and a controlled mind is ultimately a happy mind. Insightful and practical, *Cracking the Happiness Code* explains why happiness can be so hard to achieve and what can be done to overcome the struggle and find the contentment you have been missing.

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Created for active lives, form and function in a cost effective package.

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- Bike holders with optional locks
- Fits virtually all pre installed fixation points and rails
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ELITE G2 SHORT

The perfect all-round rack for all bike types

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- lockable platform which prevents your bike from moving during transport
- Optional locks for bike holders available
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- Easy-to-adjust system, the rails can move sideways, back and forward, even with your bikes on the carrier
- Lockable bike holders with a key to secure and lock your bikes on the carrier
- Carrier can be extended up to 4 bikes

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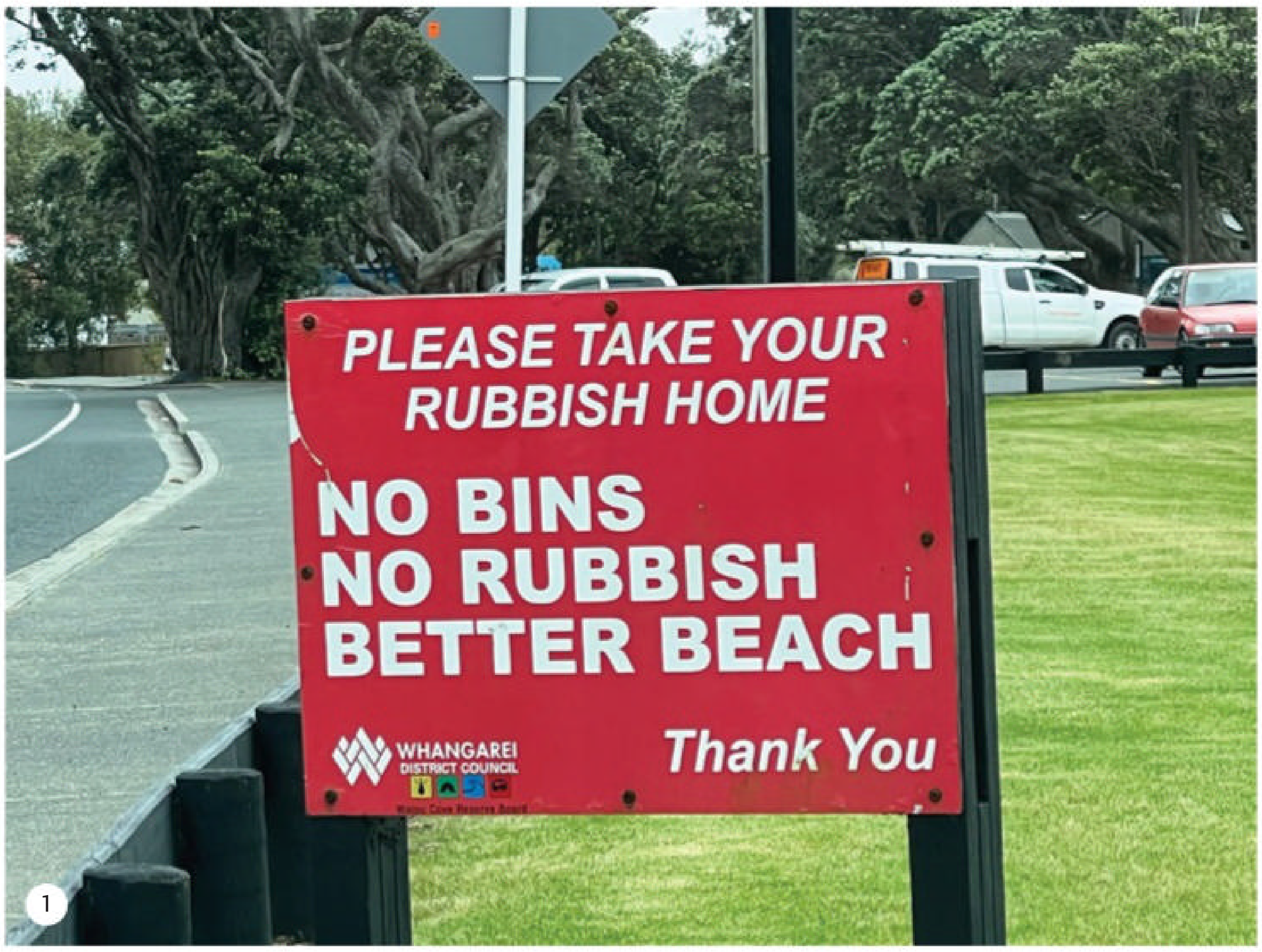
Reminiscences from NZTODAY founder Allan Dick

Words + Photos Allan Dick



ON THE ROAD

Allan Dick looks at things that make him think.

IT'S RUBBISH! Once upon a time, so this story starts, two four-wheel-drives' worth of us headed up 90 Mile Beach for some gritty camping. Despite it being a beach, 90 Mile is also a designated highway, and while it doesn't carry the traffic of Auckland's motorway system it's still surprisingly busy.

We found a spot, a shallow depression tucked away behind a couple of sand hills for privacy. The problem was the place was almost ankle deep in stuff. Detritus. Garbage. Rubbish.

It hadn't been used as a rubbish dump as such; Mother Nature had blown this stuff off the beach and into the sand hills over a long period of time. In this our campsite wasn't alone – once you got off the flat, hard sands of 90 Mile there was rubbish everywhere. Obviously, some of this stuff had come ashore from passing boats, but most of it had been tossed out the windows of passing cars or left from previous campers.

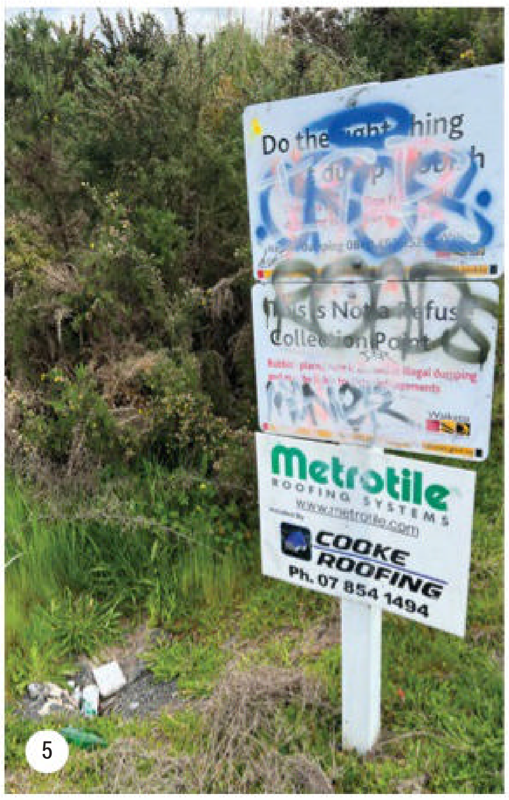
There were even parts of cars – black plastic bumpers – while a complete car was buried so deep in the sand only its roof was visible. Obviously it was a casualty of getting stuck on the beach and caught by the incoming tide.

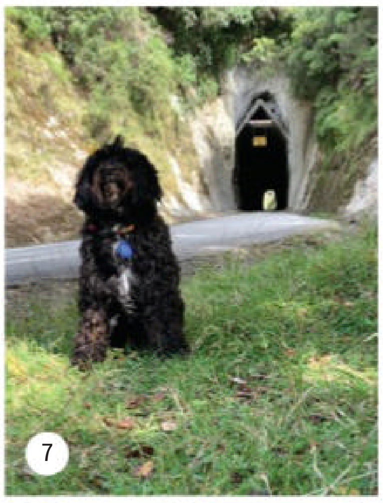
So we set to and cleaned up our shallow depression, ending up with a mountain of rubbish that we put into giant black plastic bags and took away with us after we broke camp two days later.

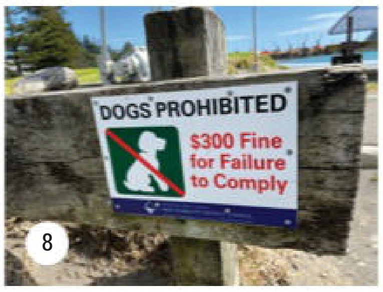
I think the local 'dump' or transfer station was near Awanui and for some reason it was closed when we arrived. So, we left our bags of rubbish outside the gates and rang the council, leaving a message on their answer phone.

Fast forward 10 or 12 years and right into the middle of the great tourist invasion that ended with Covid and New Zealand was seething with resentment towards these visitors. Those who stayed in flash digs in Queenstown weren't the problem, we perceived; the problem was overseas people in campervans, doorsliders and backpackers.

1. Some councils deliberately have areas where there are no rubbish bins, and ask people to take their rubbish away. Does that really work?
2. At least it's in a tidy pile!
3. When does litter become rubbish? Takeaway packaging is among the worst
4. Some councils make a real effort with rubbish bins







These people, we fumed, had no respect at all for New Zealand. They left rubbish everywhere and worst of all, they used our pristine outdoors as a great toilet.

Well, Covid has been and is going away, and while tourists are coming back, they're not yet in anything like the numbers we once had. But the litter, rubbish and toilet issues remain. It is, as I have always said, that too many Kiwis have no respect for our countryside, our nature, our beauty.

In the past year I have spent a lot of time exploring New Zealand and the state of some of it literally made me ill.

It's not consistent; the worst of the problem is in pockets or areas. I'm not going to identify these areas, but when we got off the roads most travelled and through some quite rural areas, in some of these regions the litter, and the graffiti of signage and infrastructure like bus sheds, was just appalling.

We drove between two towns in one region and the drainage ditches on both sides of the road were rivers of rubbish – beer cans, beer bottles, some Coke bottles, takeaway boxes, even a mattress – as if those passers-by had deliberately set out to fill the roadside drainage ditches with as much rubbish as they could.

It wasn't just this one road. It was many, and they were scattered across several regions of – mainly, I have to say – the North Island. It wasn't just the litter in these areas; it was also the graffiti on directional road signage, bus sheds, signs saying, "Please don't litter" and pretty much anything.

I can't really express the disgust I felt over this, and vented my anger in several posts on my Facebook pages – which led to something else that I might write about some other time.

People responsible for the trails of rubbish that angered me aren't the types to be bothered looking for rubbish bins – that's the role of the Great Outside World. But, even so, as a country, we do not have a consistent approach to rubbish bins.

Some councils have adopted a policy of no rubbish bins in some areas. Instead they display signage saying "Take your rubbish with you", but I am not sure that we, as a nation, are ready for that level of responsibility. Others have gone to the other extreme with enormous, colourful cube-like boxes sitting in rows for "glass", "plastics and cans" and "rubbish".

Most, however, seem to regard rubbish bins as a bit of a necessary nuisance, and adopt a half-hearted approach to them. They are dotted about, half-hidden and not always where you think they should be – outside toilets, dairies, takeaway shops, at bus stops, etc. I realise that installing them, maintaining them and regularly emptying them costs money, but I reckon it would be money well spent.

But this rubbishing of New Zealand and disregard for our country is seen in far too many walks of life. We've got a long way to go to regard ourselves as proud and fair custodians of this great land.

DOGGONE IT. I am a dog lover. In my time I have had a 'bitsa', two Golden Cocker Spaniels, a Black Cocker Spaniel, two Afghans (I am a tiger for punishment) and a Border Collie. Kate, the Border Collie came everywhere with me, and she and I became very adept at smuggling her into places where she shouldn't have gone.

Now, another dog has come into my life – Audrey, a charming little black dog, a Poodle/Papillon cross who believes she is human – and we are more responsible with her than I ever was with Kate.

Living and travelling with Audrey I have become aware of how divisive and divided dog ownership is in New Zealand. There are just so many places where dogs are just not welcome. Whole towns are anti-dog, but then suddenly, for no reason, you find somewhere where dogs are welcomed, particularly the smaller dogs that are increasingly popular and fashionable.

In many cases, the ambivalence to dogs from many quarters in New Zealand is down to some dog owners themselves – swaggering about with anti-social dogs, looking tough, but one issue that cuts across all dog owners is failing to clean up poos. There are just too many lazy and irresponsible owners.

Like our attitude towards litter, it's a question of time and education.

I love it when I go to a café and I see a dog water bowl in the outside seating area.

I read where Timaru, which has had a strict 'No Dogs' policy in the shopping centre, is going to trial allowing dogs to see how it goes. Excellent.

NO DOGS PLEASE
LAND & SUPPL
09 4
9

5. It's not just rubbish, it's also graffiti **6.** Dogs, 'man's best friend', but not universally welcomed **7.** Sometimes when travelling with Audrey, she becomes a handbrake regarding the places you can vist **8-9.** Stern warnings **10.** Dog owners can be their own worst enemy … pick up after your pet!

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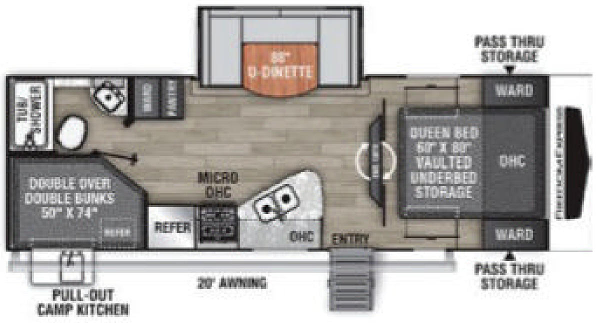
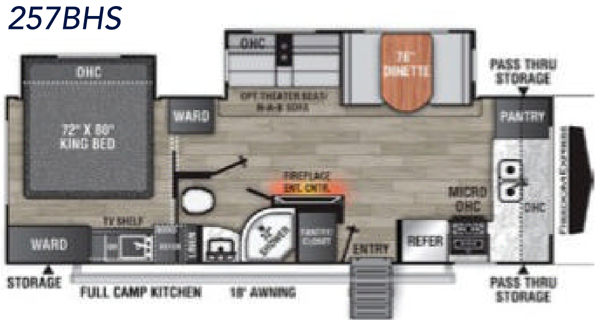

88" U-DINETTE
TUB/SHOWER
WARD
PANTRY
PASS THRU STORAGE
WARD
QUEEN BED 60" X 80" VAULTED UNDERBED STORAGE
OHC
DOUBLE OVER DOUBLE BUNKS 50" X 74"
MICRO OHC
REFER
OHC
ENTRY
WARD
PASS THRU STORAGE
20' AWNING
PULL-OUT CAMP KITCHEN

257BHS


OHC
OHC
72" X 80" KING BED
WARD
76" DINETTE
PASS THRU STORAGE
PANTRY
FIREPLACE ENT. CNTR.
MICRO OHC
OHC
TV SHELF
WARD
ENTRY
REFER
STORAGE
FULL CAMP KITCHEN
18' AWNING
PASS THRU STORAGE

259FKDS

CATALINA
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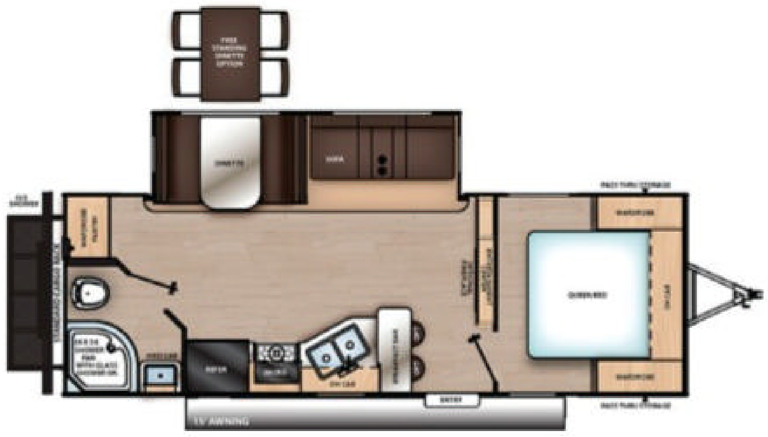
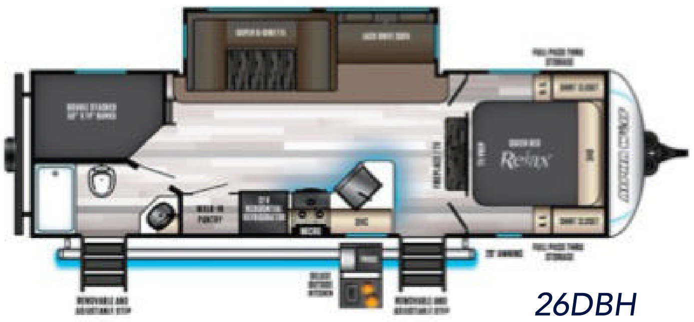
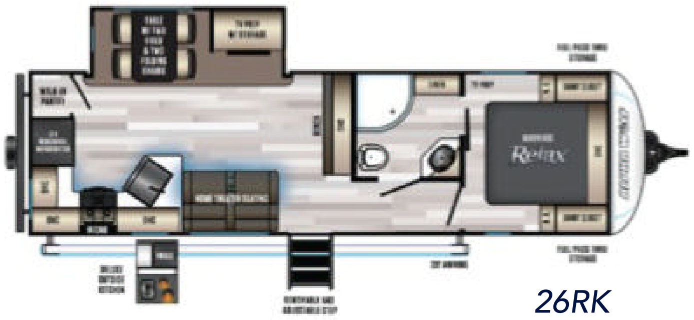


243RBS

ALPHA WOLF CARAVANS



26DBH



26RK

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Home-build bus conversion Part 7

In this update Richard gets the water sorted, powers up with the solar/electrical system and sleeps in his 2012 Nissan Civilian bus RV conversion for the first time. The ex-kindergarten bus is 6200mm long and 1920mm wide and is classified as a self-propelled caravan. Coverage of the project started in RV/NZT Volume 15.

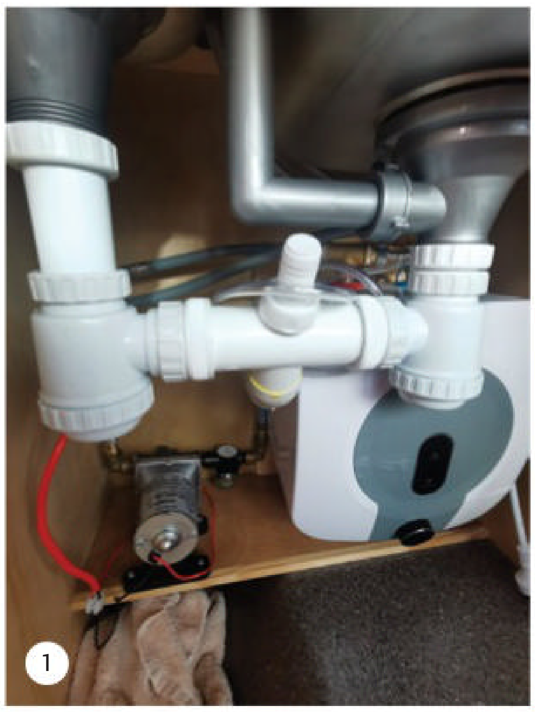
Words + **Photos** Richard Longley

We're into 2023 now and the bus is quite useable. Milestones at the end of 2022 included obtaining the self-containment certificate (valid till mid-Dec 2026), and me sleeping in it (very comfortably) for the first time on Christmas Eve. The water pipes are blanked off in the washroom for now, but are connected in the kitchen area which means hot (when connected to mains) and cold water are available there. The washbasin, kitchen sink and taps are all standard domestic items so I used normal PB pipes and fittings. Also I have a 15mm crimping tool – and the fittings are much cheaper.

I made an 'electricity cabinet', which sits behind the passenger seat, to hold the 180Ah house battery, the controls, fuses, switches, solar regulator, 1000W/2000W pure sine-wave inverter, mains distribution and cut-out box, mains battery charger, dual battery isolator, and 15m camping lead … no wonder it has to be quite big! Other electrical jobs involved finding and then fitting of a slim but powerful LED awning light above the door, a light in the washroom, strip lights above each of the two kitchen areas and four individually operated spots in the corners above the seating/bed.

I have two solar panels on the roof, each harvesting about 120W in full sun, going via the 30A regulator to the house battery and then to the inverter. I came across a switch that is really like three – connecting the central three wires (the power points) to either the bottom three (inverter) OR the top three (mains input). Thus all four domestic double power points can be either 230V normal mains when I'm plugged in OR can be 230V via the inverter. I am going to try a small domestic 230V fridge-freezer running off the inverter. If there is an unforeseen problem, there is also a 12V fridge power supply under there so that I can use a different fridge. I don't want a fridge running off gas, and in any case with my solar panels I should be okay running off electricity.

1. Finished under the sink
2. Detail of the wardrobe shelf construction
3. Making the wardrobe, this view on its side
4. Wardrobe in place with the wiring, no door on
5. Packing the upper panels
6. The top side panel covered
7. Making a shelf unit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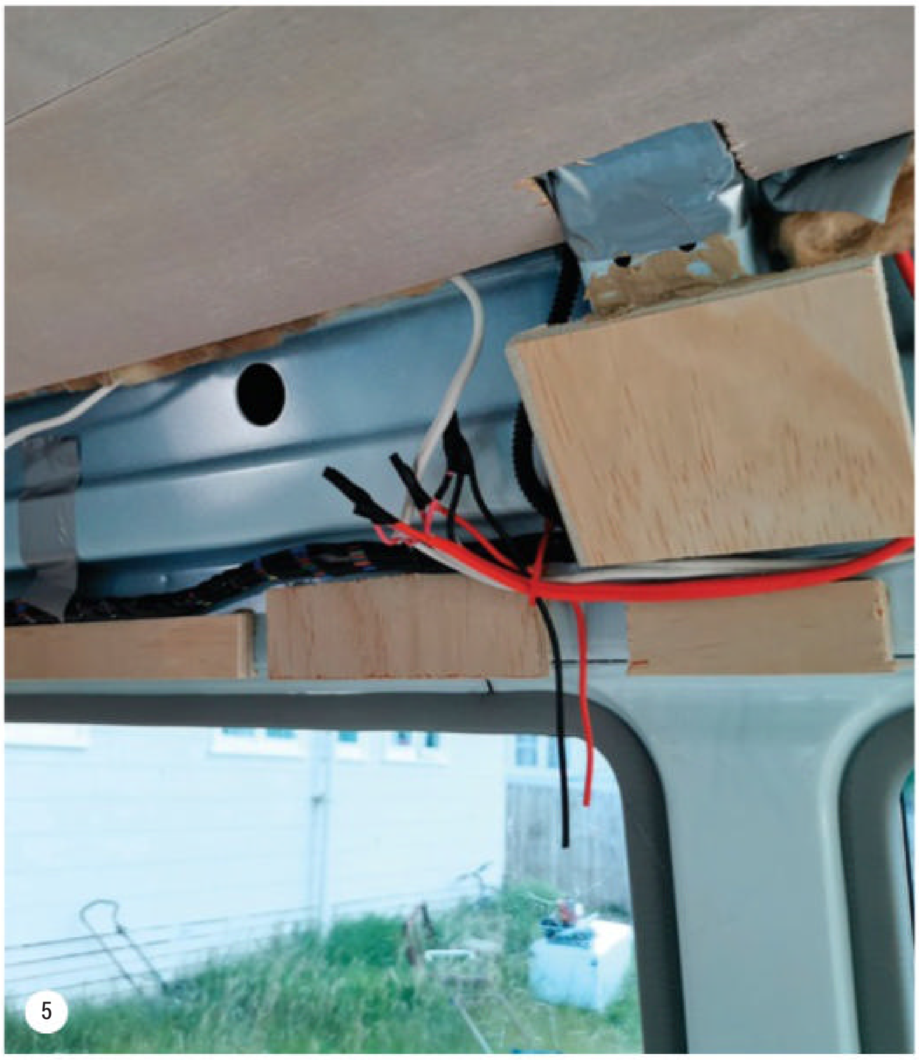
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One must not forget that a 120W solar panel will give out much less when it is cloudy and/or when the sun is low in the sky! A small fridge typically uses about 60–75W (i.e. about 6A from a 12V power supply). Other things that are to run off the inverter are: the gas hob spark, occasionally a desk fan (20W), small TV, laptop, soldering iron (15W), etc. In my opinion a 600W very small domestic toaster is starting to push any 12V/230V inverter system a bit – and a 750W microwave even more. It is not so much the rated capacity of the inverter; it is the very high DC currents that will flow from the 12V system (e.g. over 50A for a toaster, 65A for a microwave). High currents create heating in wires and if there is a poor connection or dirty/worn switch contact it could result in a fire!

The wardrobe was made mostly on its side inside the bus since it was very heavy. I could only dowel in the shelves on one side and the bottom shelf with partition since it would not otherwise flip into place. Once this part was fitted (screwed against the kitchen unit), I dowelled and glued on the washroom side – which is the left-hand upright of the wardrobe. The top part of the wardrobe has a back – and as previously explained cables running down the inside corner (for the water pump, microwave/oven power point and benchtop power point). The wardrobe is marvellous deep storage and easily accessible. Luckily I had correctly calculated enough of the nice birch ply for the washroom/loo door, kitchen main doors, and wardrobe and electricity cabinet door and have only scraps to spare.

7

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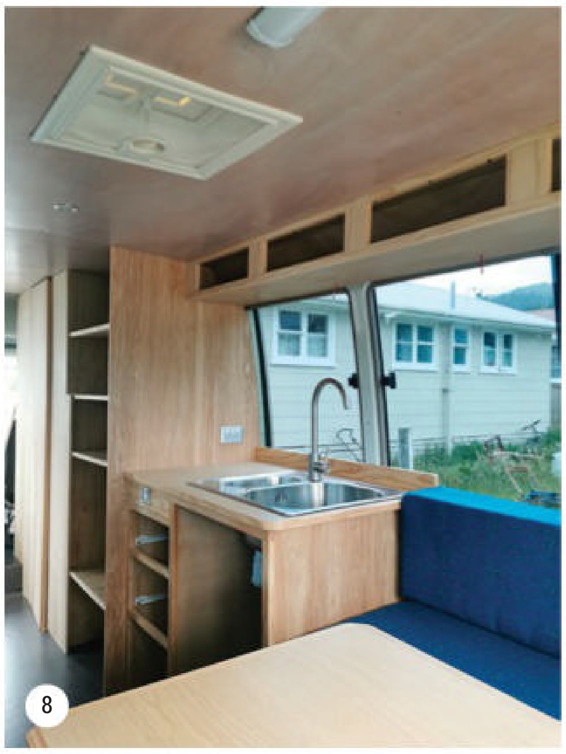

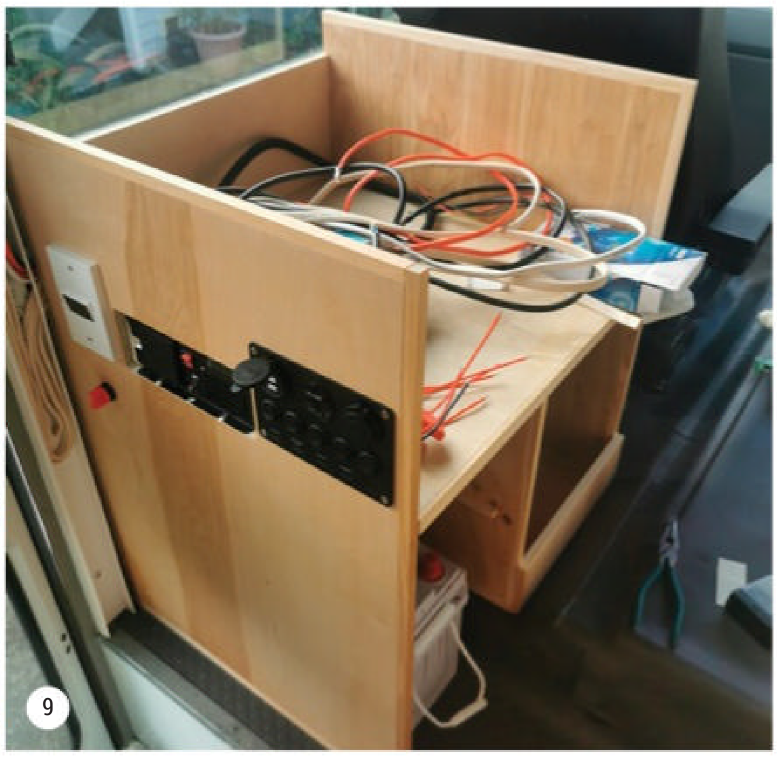

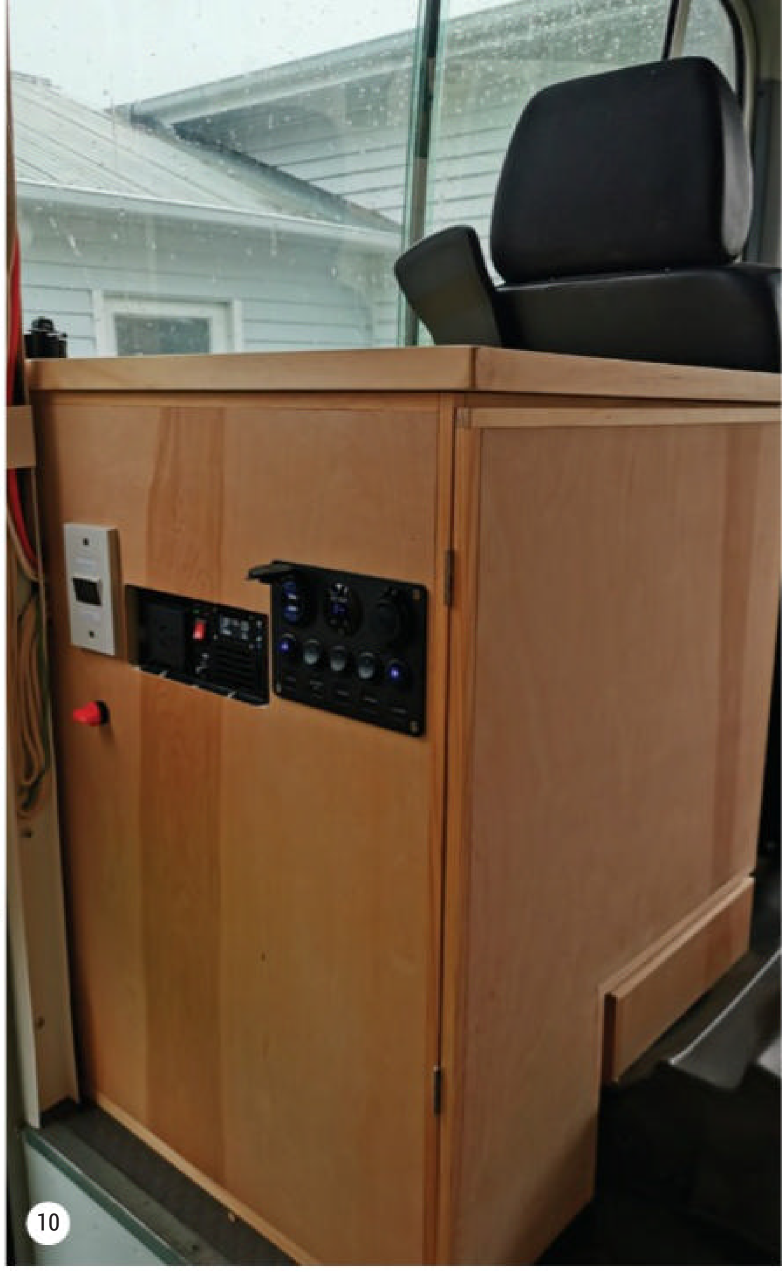

I've been thinking about how to make the upper rear shelves for months but realised I couldn't start until I had the wardrobe upright and permanently in place. I need the shelf, not just to hide wiring and for storage but because the curtain rail is to hang from it as well as the four reading spotlights. I will probably fit a small built-in radio at the back that works from the house battery (the vehicle radio at the front needs the key switched on to ACC).

Firstly I stuck pieces of scrap 12mm ply onto the bus metal (with 'no more nails') to leave room for wiring. Then lengths of 6mm ply with parallel bevelled edges (complicated!) were nailed and stuck onto the packing pieces. I then measured the height of the shelf front (it was to be screwed onto where there is the ceiling ply joint – 160mm), and made front frames from 18mm pine (see pic) – about 2100mm long on sink side and 2800mm hob side. **RV**

8. Putting the shelf unit in place
9. The half-finished electricity box
10. Finished electricity cabinet ready to go

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February fun!

Latest news from the caravan and motorhome sector in the UK, Europe and USA from John Rawlings.

Words + Photos John Rawlings

As I write this, I've just been to the opening day of the Caravan, Camping and Motorhome Show at the NEC in Birmingham. It follows just four months after the Motorhome, Caravan and Camping Show (also at the NEC) and is very similar, but devotes more space to holiday destinations (campsites in UK, France, Ireland, etc) and camping equipment (a whole hall of tents).

In terms of new model launches, traditionally there's always more at the October show (as it's the start of the new model year, and manufacturers like to get orders to produce in time for Spring) than the February one, and this year was no exception, but I did manage to spot a handful of new models.

Bailey chose the February show to introduce its 'facelifted' lightweight Discovery caravan range, including a new layout – the D4-4L, which replaces the D4-3.

Externally, there are new graphics and bolder 'Discovery' badging. The single front window remains, while the interiors have had a bit of a subtle makeover, still with a fresh, modern and contemporary styling.

The new D4-4L, priced at £21,499 would be classed as 'entry-level' (although it has a more-than-adequate specification) and is aimed at those wanting a compact and lightweight 4-berth. I know Bailey gets a lot of enquiries for caravans with a lower weight suitable for electric or smaller cars.

It has an MTPLM of only 1,082kg and an internal length of just 4.17m (shipping length: 5.922m), so it should be easy to tow and manoeuvre. The layout includes a rear corner washroom, a side dinette (with bunk) opposite the centre kitchen, and a front dinette that converts into a double bed. It fits a lot into a small caravan. I can't really think of any rivals for it on the market at the moment, so it will be interesting to see if Bailey has created a niche in the market that will be prove a success.

Auto-Sleeper, the UK motorhome manufacturer that's now owned by the Trigano Group in France, showed a new Mercedes-Benz Sprinter-based campervan conversion – the M-Star. At 7.15m long, it looked huge, and has an MTPLM of 3,880kg, so it's no lightweight. Inside, there is a rear lounge that can be used as two single beds or one large double, and a kitchen in the centre opposite a large wardrobe and washroom. Auto-Sleeper hasn't issued a full specification or price yet, but I would expect it to be around the £100,000 level (at least).

Over on the Adria stand, there was its new-to-the-UK campervan, the Active Duo, which is based on a Renault. Very few converters use the Renault van, despite it being quite good-looking after its latest facelift, so it's cool to see something different. It has twin sliding

DISCOVERY
DISCOVERY
WiFi ready

1

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3

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side doors (hence the name Duo?) which creates a nice open feeling to the living area, although does dramatically reduce the size of the side kitchen. It's a model that Adria has sold on the continent for a while, but is new to the UK. It is a four-berth and is retailing for £62,795.

The Swift representative I spoke to said the new model they'd hoped to have at the show had been delayed. The Elddis brand didn't really have any motorhomes at the show as (so I was told) it had already sold out of 2023 production.

Coachman had all of its Travel Master motorhome range (on the Mercedes Sprinter) on display, starting from £127,000. They are stunning, and I believe they're made in Sweden by Coachman's parent company, Kabe (hence a more European styling). I particularly liked the attention to detailing that's gone into their rear ends (if you'll pardon the expression!)

1. Bailey Discovery compact caravan
2. Inside the Bailey Discovery
3. VW Pop-top campervan
4. New Adria campervan

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Half-term holidays

Mid-February, for us the schools have a half-term holiday for one week, and I certainly made the most of it with a trip to France in a Bailey Adamo 69-4 motorhome.

We took it for a weekend in Paris, staying at the Huttopia Camping de Paris campsite which is undergoing extensive renovations at the moment ready for the main season. It was an excellent base for getting into the centre of the city. Our excuse for stopping here was that my son was on a school choir trip to Paris, which meant we attended concerts in a couple of spectacular churches before scooping him up for the next part of our half-term adventure: skiing in the French Alps.

It's taken me several years to persuade my wife to use a motorhome for a skiing holiday. She was worried about being cold and having ski gear to cope with in a small space. Showing her photos of the campsite I'd chosen – Camping Huttopia in Bourg Saint Maurice – helped to change her mind as it had a drying room to leave ski boots, skis and damp clothing in.

The campsite is in a valley, so no need to zig-zag the motorhome up a mountain. There were big lumps of snow left, but the roads were clear and we didn't have to trudge through snow when going to the facilities block for a shower. It had been -10°C the week before we arrived, but was only -2 or -3 when we were there – very manageable – in fact, some nights, we even had to turn the heating down in the motorhome.

A free shuttle bus from the campsite took us to a funicular train up the mountain to the Les Arcs ski resorts at 1,600m, 1,800m and 2,000m. Once at the resorts, it turned into a winter wonderland of snow. Beautiful! I'm hoping we'll be able to do it again next year.

March in Morocco

Having just returned from half-term in France, it's now only a couple of weeks until I head off to Morocco with the Bailey-of-Bristol Sahara Challenge.

This 2,700-mile road trip started in March 2020 and we got as far as Portugal (from Bristol) before the pandemic hit, borders to Morocco closed, and we had to make a quick dash back to the UK.

This time, the trip carries on from where it left off: in Portugal, before crossing to Spain to get a ferry to Morocco. It's going to be quite an adventure, and I've been responsible for project managing the whole trip. The official start is on 15th March so be sure to follow #SaharaChallenge so you get to see every post along the way. **RV**

5. John Rawling, greetings from the snow

6. RV Lifestylers love the sun - and the snow

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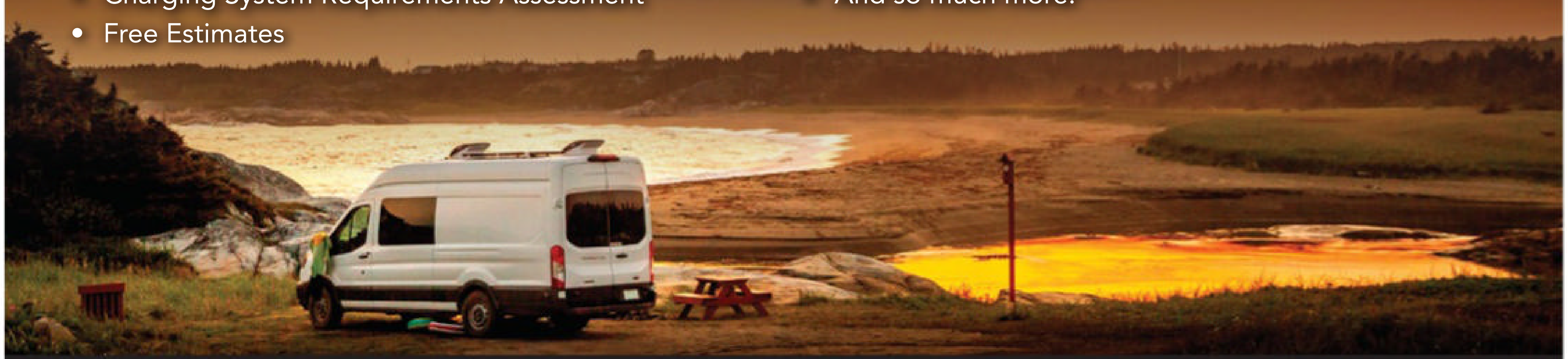

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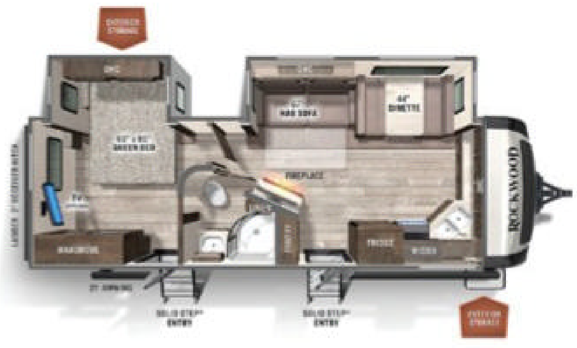

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Buy a ticket to the 2023 Covi SuperShow and you're not just guaranteed to see the very best the New Zealand motorhome industry has to offer, you're also in with a chance to win a four-week motorhome holiday in either the USA or the United Kingdom. The RV Super Centre is proud to be sponsoring this year's Grand Prize. Collect stamps at the kiosks around the show and hand in your ticket to go in the draw to win a motorhome for four weeks in either the USA or UK (your choice!) with one of the thl brands (El-Monte – USA or Just go – UK). It's a great way to experience the motorhome lifestyle internationally (terms and conditions apply).

Better still buy your tickets online and get a bonus entry into the Grand Prize draw. You could also win an electric bike from Torpedo 7.

The No Reserve Auction always attracts a huge crowd. This year, in association with TrailLite Group, a brand new Benimar motorhome will be going under the hammer at 12pm on Saturday March 18 in the outdoor food court area. Come along and see if you can pick up a bargain.

If you are in the market for a new vehicle, the Covi $10K cashback offer is a great incentive to make your purchase at the show – or up to two weeks afterwards. Buyers need to register at the show with their dealer and will go in the draw to win $10,000 cash.

The free rally at the Ellerslie Racecourse is a great way to turn the show into a weekend away. There will be free buses running to and from the show. Find out more details at www.supershow.co.nz.

Spot On Exhibitions managing director David Culpan says the show is the biggest of its kind in the country, and a wide range of exhibitors have booked places. "Come and see the RV Super Centre in Hall 1 on the biggest stand we've ever had at the Covi SuperShow. Jayco are back in their own hall in Hall 6 and TrailLite Group will have all the latest releases from their own range and from across Europe," says David. "We've also got a huge range of new exhibitors never seen before at the Covi SuperShow." The show is also the place to be if you're looking for advice.

Seminars will run regularly over the three days with industry experts covering a wide variety of topics including electric bikes, what to look for when buying a motorhome or caravan, batteries, technology on the road and holidaying in Australia.

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JB Caravans manufacture all aspects of the build in their impressive facility in Campbellfield, Australia, giving them the unique selling proposition of producing the highest quality build while maintaining pricing affordability. JB Caravans have a skilled workforce with many years of caravan manufacturing experience, and pride themselves in providing quality workmanship. Incorporating a flow-through process, each caravan is assembled piece by piece to maintain their method of rigid quality control.

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The camper trailer market has seen many manufacturers come and go over the years, but the Cub name has held firm. Originally starting as a box trailer business in 1968, Cub has been in the camper trailer business for over 50 years, making them the longest-running Australian-made camper trailer manufacturer. In that time, they have gained the knowledge and experience to build their trailers to suit the harshest conditions the outback can throw at them.

The Ezy-Wind system is what really sets Cub Campers apart when it comes to easy setup. With the help of this innovative technology your Cub will be up in a few short minutes, and is simple enough for one person to set up on their own, whether they're eight or eighty years old. All Cub Campers come standard with a silent winch, so there's no need to worry about waking up your neighbours on those early morning starts.

Floor lighting is standard across the Cub range, while flick-mix taps and a 12V pump in every Cub kitchen are just some of the many comfort features to make your camping experience even better. Cub's touring model, the Weekender, features ALKO 4-leaf shackle spring suspension as standard – perfect for light off-road travel – while the Explorer and Traveller are built for tough off-road explorations capable of taking on rough dirt roads and heavy corrugations. For the more adventurous campers, independent suspension is standard on the Brumby, Escape, Frontier and Drifter models, allowing you to tackle the toughest terrain your vehicle can handle.

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D&E Outdoors are exclusive distributors for JB Caravans and Cub Campers in New Zealand and offer extensive after-sale parts support, along with a great range of accessories to further enhance your local adventures. Their comprehensive workshop provides service and repair options for motorhomes, caravans, boats and more – if you want to get wet, get dirty or go anywhere, talk to them today! RV

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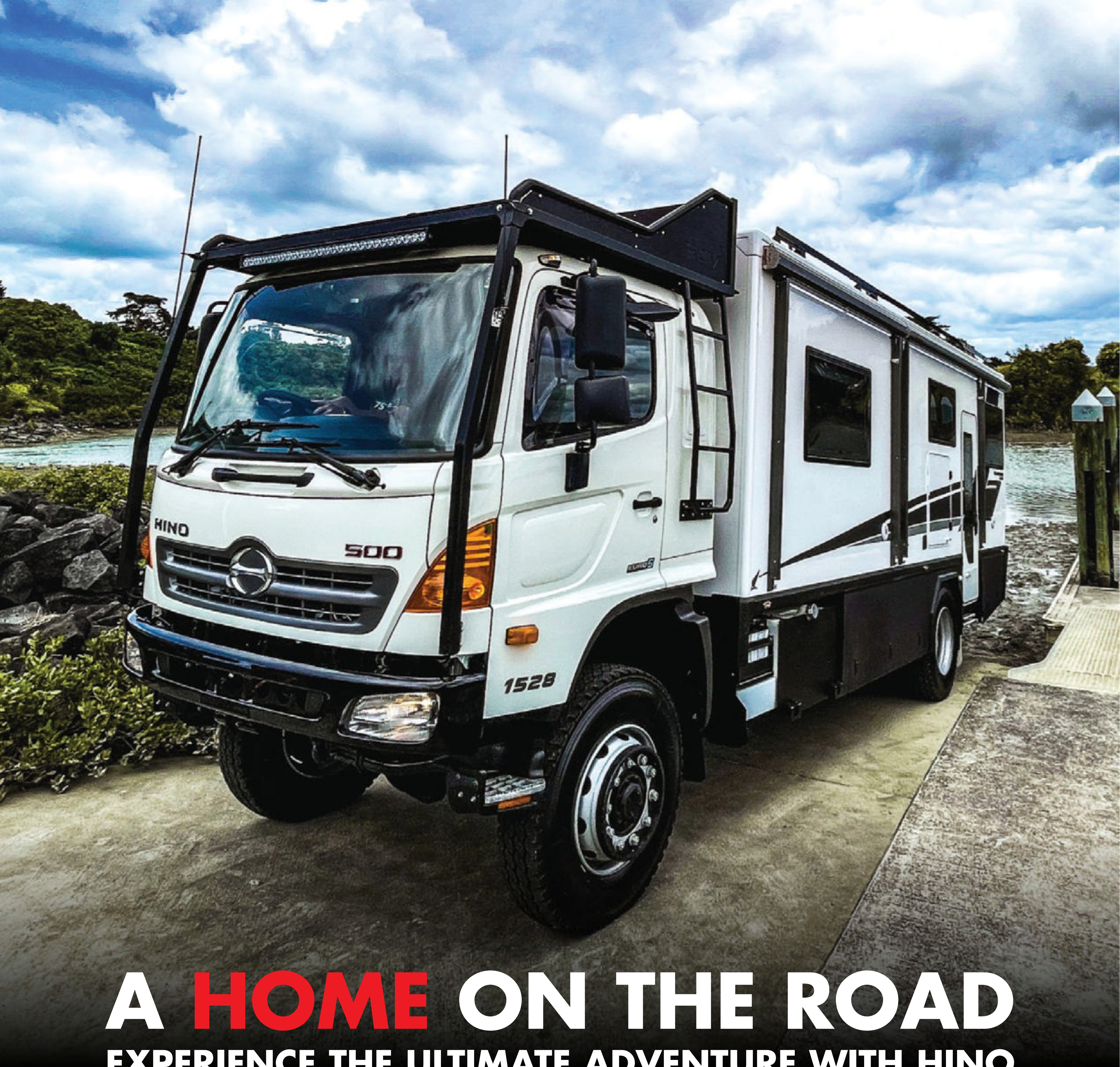

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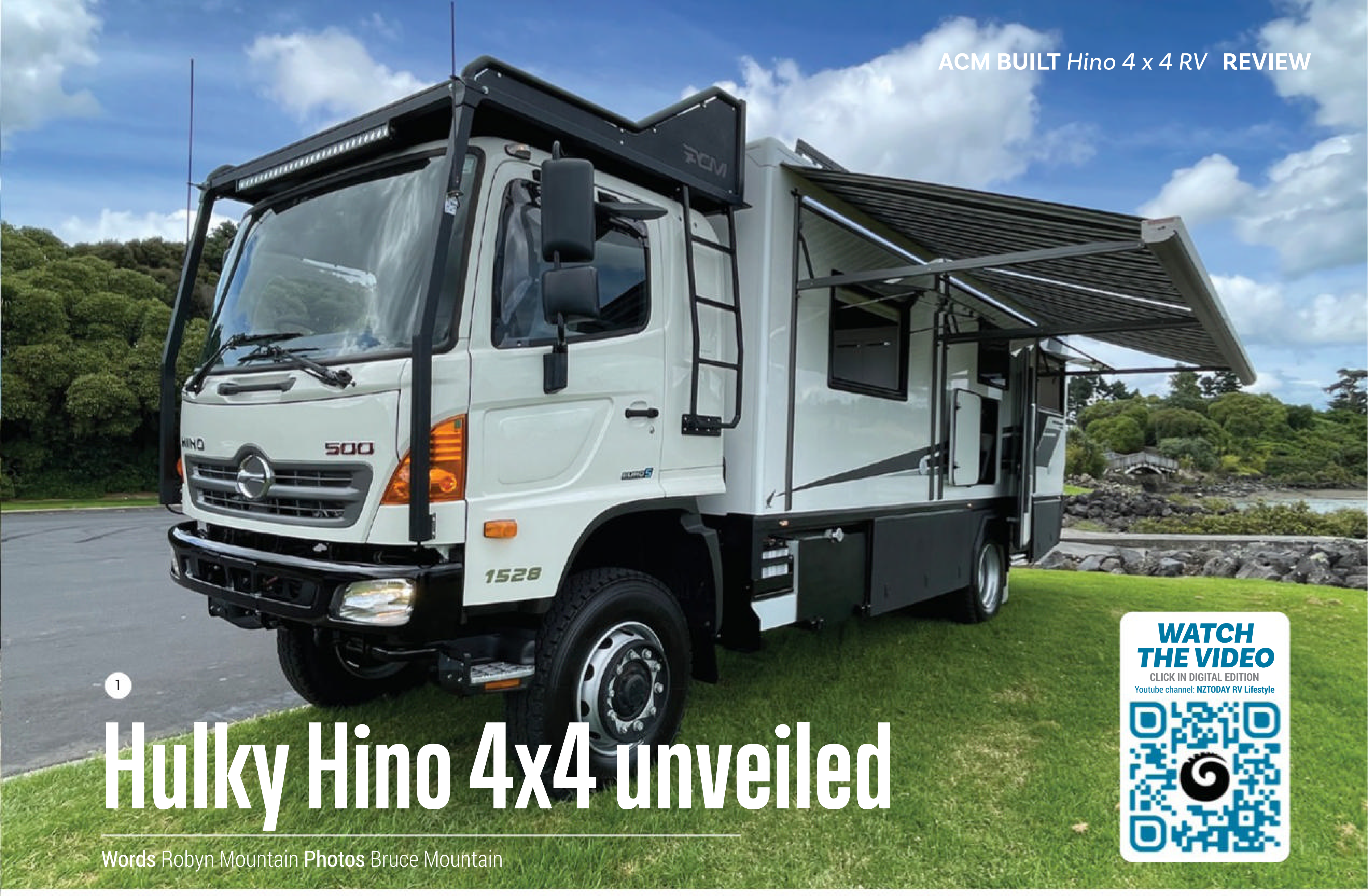

Hulky Hino 4x4 unveiled

Words Robyn Mountain **Photos** Bruce Mountain

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We got the call mid-February from Chris Cunard, owner of ACM (Auckland Coach Motorhomes) the luxury motorhome manufacturers based in Māngere, Auckland, inviting us to check out the latest custom-built Platinum motorhome that was finished and ready for the client to collect in a few days.

Finding a sunny day was challenging but we got ourselves to the factory a few days later, and I admit my jaw hit the driveway when we first viewed the beast out front – holy heck a Hino truck base, and it's huge!

We jumped in the cab with Chris. That is an exaggeration; I humphed and stretched as I endeavoured to climb up the access steps into the cab, completely missing the first one in the middle of the big wheel – which would have been super helpful. The Rock got a butt-full on camera that I will probably cut out of the video – or not, you will have to watch and see…

The cab is a three-seater with two luxury leather seats – heated as well as fully adjustable for comfort, air suspension too – with a multi-purpose seat in the middle. Once you climb up into the cab it is all luxury carbon fibre and leather. On the road it offers smooth powerful driving, and what we noticed straightaway was how quiet it was in the cab in terms of road and engine-noise. Chris said they had lined the cab area with soundproofing for real driving comfort. The other thing that jumped out at me were the external mirrors with the separate convex spotter mirror and kerb view. What a fantastic safety tool for the driver (and for passengers), to have an almost three-dimensional view to the rear, sides and close by the front wheels right there in easy view. They are also heated and fully adjustable electrically from the cab. The windscreen is also a little special being heat absorbing laminated glass (heated), with smart rain-sensing windscreen wipers as well.

The multi-media system does it all on the 6.5˝ LCD, HD touch screen that has all the expected connections, CAN bus connected, and Wi-Fi enabled. I have listed some of the basic tech specs of the Hino unit itself herein.

Chris drove us to a picturesque spot down the road so we could put the awnings (yes two of them) out and check out the vehicle fully. We parked up and set up the RV for a few photos and video. The electric awnings on remote were cool, and the fact there are two separate awnings to cover the side of the vehicle caught the eye, as did the push bars supporting the large storage platform across the top of the cab unit. There are also bars running along both sides of the house unit roof giving protection from overhanging branches.

"Are there any special custom items in the 'house' Chris?" I asked. "Everything is customised," he replied. Fitting the air suspension in the front was still to be done, but the self-levelling system was already in.

1. The 14,500kg Hino 500 1526 cab is impressive. On the cab roof above the storage tray for the likes of kayaks and all manner of things **2.** Chris Cunard driving the Hino 500 4x4 luxury motorhome that ACM have just finished custom building **3.** Two awnings to cover the length, double electric step to entry, tow bar

4

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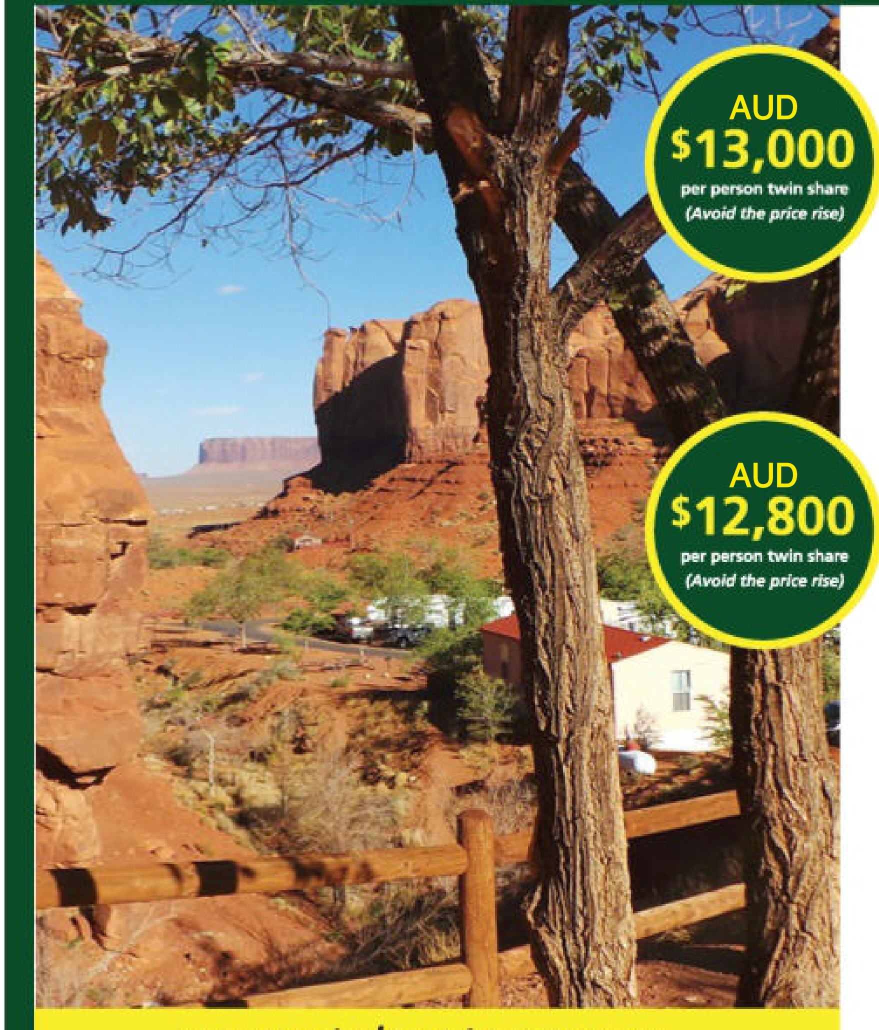
To fit the customer's brief that the RV be capable of self-sufficiency for weeks at a time, the build included an investment of around $70k for 1380Ah Mastervolt lithium batteries and associated management systems, expansive 1080W solar panels while the massive 6kW inverter is the biggest I have seen thus far. Very impressive. Water won't be a problem either with 600 litres of fresh, 420 litres grey, and a whopping 300-litre black toilet tank.

Stepping up four steps into the house, the classic features of an ACM build take over your senses – the lineal teak wood flooring and stunning leather rear lounge draws you into its luxurious comfort, while your eyes take in the incredible high-gloss finish to the cherry wood on the overhead cabinets, and the length and breadth of the white Corian kitchen benchtops on both sides of the kitchen area look so sleek and sophisticated. The large windows and graphic on the splashback to the sink unit also impressed, and seeing the induction cooking hob with two elements I realised what I had been looking for on the outside of the vehicle but hadn't found: gas bottle storage. Chris confirmed there is no gas at all in this build; the heating and hot water are diesel-powered.

Drawers and pull-out pantry storage aplenty under the sink bench. I opened the end cupboard expecting storage space and found a compact Camec washing machine. Turning to the opposite cabinet there's a Fridgetech marine 220L 12V compressor fridge unit – a double door model with freezer on the left and fridge on the right. Plenty of food preparation space on top of this unit. Playing with a remote we found lying around, we discovered that the end of the bench unit (by the habitation door entrance) has a hidden mechanism that houses the 32˝ Smart LED TV unit – press the remote and up it comes, or down it goes. Satellite dish on the roof. There was no oven unit of any sort – I presume a BBQ unit of some description will be the order of the day in one of the large exterior lockers. This unit is destined for travel around places like Australia and probably Africa, so you imagine a few steaks or bangers on the barbie would be in order – or maybe the owners are vegan, I just don't know.

There is a door to the next area. Opening it we walk through to the bathroom space with its big 900mm square shower box with black shower head rail unit and a rain-sensing electric fan above with LED lights. On the opposite wall is an impressive ceramic toilet, with electric flush system to the black tank.



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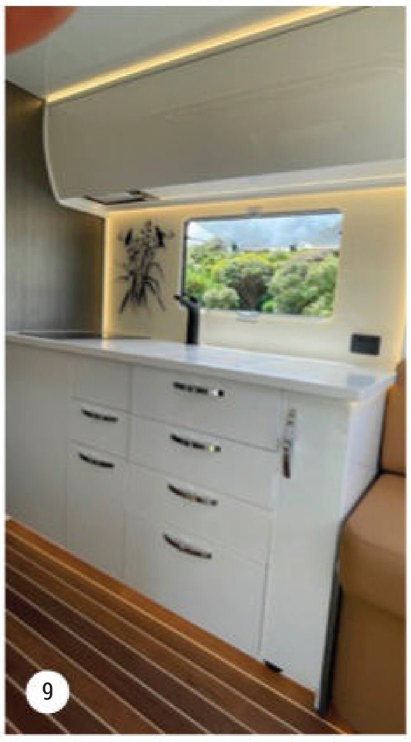
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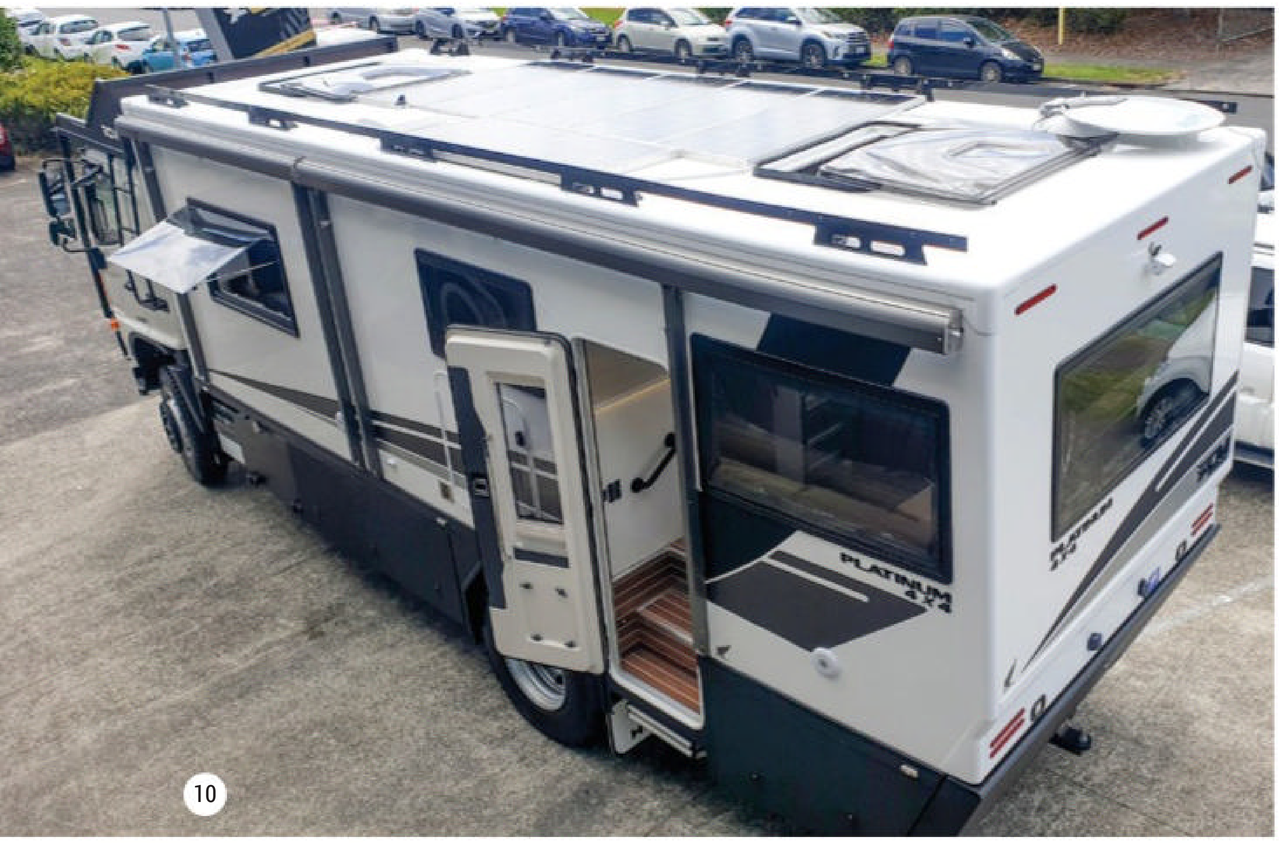

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4. Two internal steps at entry, one lifts for storage below, a grab handle on the left with light switches and electric step control. The under seat cupboard on the right will have a custom chiller box installed. Teak flooring is classic, the high gloss finish on the overhead cherry wood cabinets are stunning, and the custom electric slide opening roof vent is impressive **5.** Remote activated TV pops up when needed from the large second bench unit with under bench 220L fridge-freezer. Extra wide 700mm habitation entry door with pull-out fly screen **6.** Customised crockery drawer **7.** Open this locker to reveal the third Smart TV unit, below a large storage locker space **8.** The luxury leather lounge just begs to be lounged on **9.** Sleek Corian kitchen sink unit, lots of storage underneath, Induction hob for cooking with rangehood, decorative back splash behind with large window, overhead locker storage in high gloss white finish **10.** Checking out the roof from the office, 1040 watts of solar panels, and look at the roof vents that slide open, not pushing up

TECH SPEC'S

Hino 500 Series GT 1528 Euro 5 4 x 4 truck base cab chassis $300,000 approx

Engine

- HINO J08E-VD. Max. output 280hp/208kW @ 2400 rpm
- Max torque 814Nm @ 1500 rpm
- Euro 5 diesel 6-cyclinder, turbocharged and intercooled with overhead camshaft
- Direct injection with EGR
- Allison 2500 auto transmission
- Selectable 4 x 4 and low-range selection
- GVM 14,500kg, GCM 15,000kg, wheelbase 4250mm
- 280Ah alternator for fast battery charging

Brakes and suspension Drum brakes front and rear with Air Over Hydraulic (AOH), dual circuit with ABS, equipped with exhaust brake and ABS, spring brake on rear wheels.

In the front fully floating, single reduction front axle with constant velocity universal joints. Taper leaf springs with shock absorbers for suspension. In the rear axle fully floating, single reduction by hypoid gears. Semi-elliptic main and auxiliary leaf spring suspension. No spin rear diff.

Chassis frame Ladder-shaped channel section side rails. Main section 270mm depth x 90mm flange x 8mm thick. Overall length 7460mm, width 2415mm, height 2880mm. Cab to axle centre 3425mm, front overhang 1235mm, rear overhang 1975mm, rear chassis height at axle 1240mm. Six 10-stud disc wheels with 11R22.5144/142 tyres. HWH hydraulic levelling system, air suspension, reverse camera.

Cab features Cab is ECE-R29 cab-strength-certified, all-steel construction with electro-hydraulic power tilt mechanism for engine access. External: Electric and heated mirrors – 2 flat type, 2 convex spotters and kerb view. Rear colour camera, reversing alarm, anti-lock brake system. Interior: SRS air bag system for the driver, cruise control. 6.5" LCD, HD touch-screen display with DAB+ AM/FM radio, AUX input, Bluetooth® 4.1, CAN bus connected and Wi-Fi enabled are some features in the multi-media system. Central locking, keyless entry, and heat absorbing laminated windscreen glass are other features for driving comfort. The driver's seat is top-of-the-line ISRI 6860/870 with integrated safety belt, while the passenger seat features urethane foam pads, high back, and reclining seat with air suspension. ACM 4X4 Platinum house build spec's. Overall length 9000mm, 3300mm high, 2415mm wide

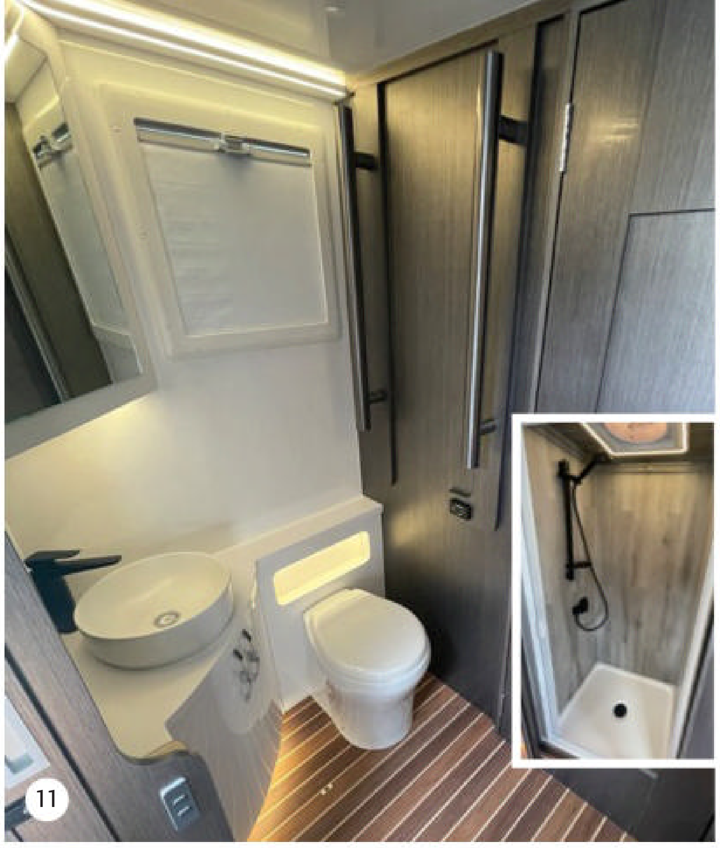
Self-containment and living

- Water – 620L fresh water, 420L grey water, 300L black tanks
- Marine stainless steel double door 220L 12V/230V compressor fridge with freezer
- Electric induction cook top
- Eberspacher 4kW diesel heating
- Diesel hot water system • Washing machine

Power system

- 6kW Mastervolt inverter system, 1380Ah Mastervolt lithium batteries,1080W solar system, 280Ah Mastervolt alternator upgrade, 150Ah Mastervolt chargers, CZone digital switching and monitoring system, full AC/DC and tank monitoring, custom alarm settings

Construction Fully insulated aluminium-framed, vacuum-formed fibreglass walls, interior and exterior. Double-glazed fully opening windows with integrated blinds, electric step entry, hard-wired air compressor for tyres in the mud, teak and holy style flooring, full leather lounge, high-gloss cherry wood cabinets, Corian bench tops.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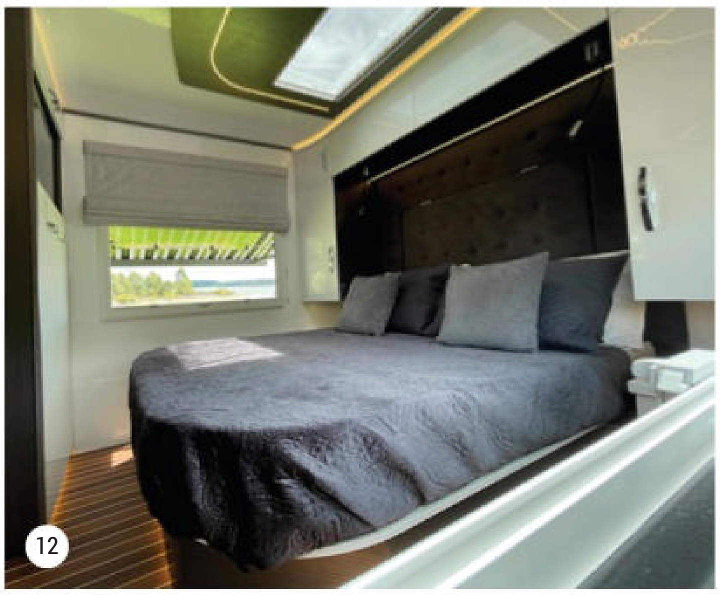
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A corner bench unit has a round Corian sink on top with storage underneath and subtle LED lighting tucked in and around it. Overhead the mirrored storage cabinet and opening window with blinds finishes the space.

The pocket sliding door opens to reveal the bedroom, an island bed taking centre stage with an impressive headboard and overhead storage lockers. Looking a bit closer at the headboard you realise there is a removeable section that opens to give access to the driving cab in front, a security measure for possible use when travelling in remote parts of the world. There is expansive wardrobe and shelf storage, drawers on both sides of the bed, more storage under the bed, and a large roof vent overhead – the same as over the dining room. When looking down on the vehicle earlier, from the office, I had noticed that the roof vents looked different, and asked Chris about them. He confirmed they were another custom item – they are push-button electrically operated and slide open rather than lifting like standard vents – see the video. Again, the lines are almost minimalistic, clean, and linear – no steps around the bed, high-gloss white finishes, big 32˝ Smart TV flush-fitted in the wall, flat roman blinds over the big windows, gorgeous teak floors below, slick finishing on the interior.

What a fantastic build from ACM. The custom features added to the already bespoke build that is standard from ACM take this home to another level. I have referred to this area as the 'house' as opposed to the motorhome or RV, because it has a level of separation from the cab unit which changes the dynamic to feeling like a separate tiny home or apartment you step up into. Our thanks to Chris for the invitation, and to the private owner for permission to allow the vehicle to be featured prior to handover. RV

11. Ceramic pedestal toilet, vanity and storage on one side, large shower on the other

12. Looking through the large side window into the bedroom. Check out the headboard for the access hatch, high gloss finishes on surfaces, love the floor. Wardrobes and drawers on both sides of the bed, more wardrobe storage with 32" TV above to the left of entry, drawer at the foot of the bed. Push button electric opening roof vent above

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Ford Transit technology for Dethleffs

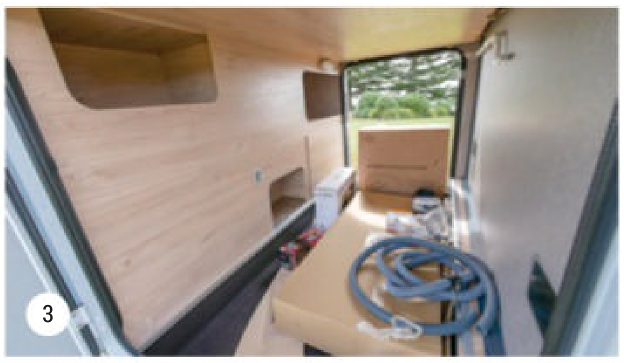
Words Robyn Mountain
Photos Bruce Mountain

Hot off the boat for 2023 and now at the Zion Motorhomes showroom is the first of the Dethleffs German-built 2023 models. These front-wheel-drive models utilise the Ford Transit Euro VIE 2 litre TDCI Eco Blue cab chassis and these underpin their biggest selling motorhome. The adoption of the Ford Transit Custom chassis is an alternative to the Fiat Ducato chassis that have been used since 1983 by Dethleffs. We look at the scope of this change separately, herein.

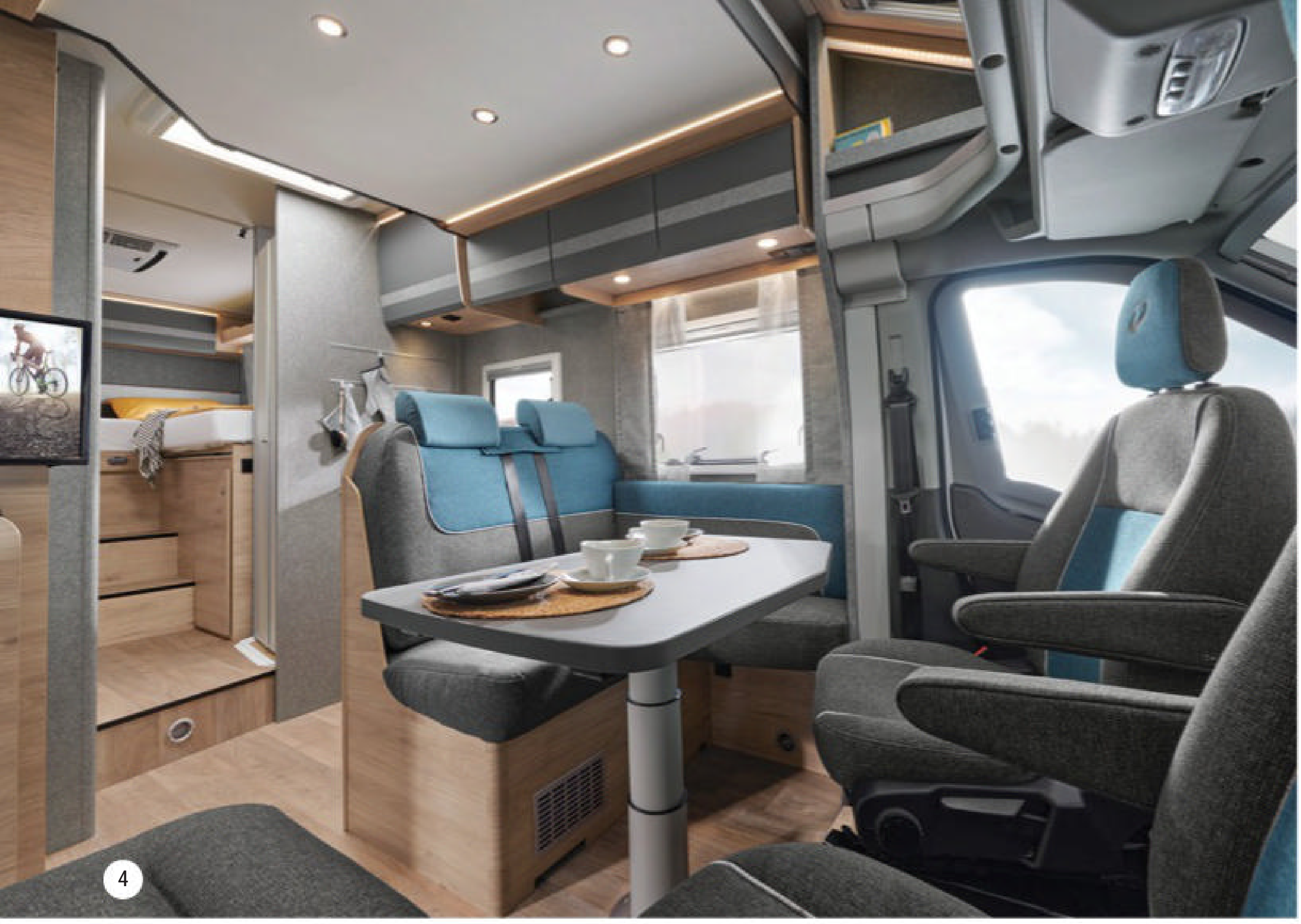
We checked out the first model to arrive, on the 4100kg Ford Transit chassis Dethleffs Just Go low-profile four-berth motorhome with the Goldschmitt air suspension package included for $190k. There is a 3499kg WoF chassis that attracts a Clean Car tax at this weight so going for the heavier vehicle is now more viable when purchasing new. The exterior build is classic Dethleffs with the extra-wide habitation entry door, and big garage storage with access on both sides, large enough for an e-bike to be secured inside, 150kg surface loading, and it's even heated.

Lifetime construction technology includes tried-and-tested reliable flooring and superstructure with excellent EPS insulation, floor thickness is 49mm, side wall thickness 34mm and roof thickness 35mm. The roof is GRP. Rear moulding with third brake light. Side panels and rear panel made of resistant high-gloss GRP with smooth, shiny surface. The front bumper with fog lights, is painted to match the body of the vehicle. Central locking for cab and habitation entry door is great.

Pressing the button on the left inside of the entry door gets the wide step popping out and allowing you to step directly onto the living space floor. To the right of entry is a fixed bench seat on the wall behind the driver's cab seat. Opposite, the L-shaped lounge seating with removeable and fully adjustable dining table sits behind the passenger cab seat.



1. Lifetime construction technology: EPS insulation floor thickness 49mm, side wall thickness 34mm, and roof thickness 35mm GRP roof. Tried-and-tested reliable flooring and superstructure with excellent insulation **2.** The habitation door is a generous 700mm width, with fitted pull-out fly screen, electric step button on the left of entry; door window has privacy blind and central locking **3.** Large 950mm x 1150mm locker doors on both sides to access the garage storage space, big enough to secure an e-bike if required. 150kg surface load, anti-slip surface, heated, lashing strips, illuminated, 1x 230V socket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Overhead lockers for storage, with one dummy cupboard front that opens when lowering the hidden ceiling bed above this area, to accommodate the bed over the dinette seating. The two front-facing dinette seats have seat belts fitted for two extra passengers. The front cab seats and dining upholstery is matching in the special Salerno blue fabric, one of the choices available in this range.

Both front cab seats are fully adjustable for height and tilt, have built-in headrests and arm rests, and swivel into the dining/living space for even more seating.

In the front cab itself, the large Ford SYNC 3 multi-media unit and rear camera unit sits in the middle of the dash, with cruise control and entertainment buttons on the steering wheel at the driver's fingertips. The ever-important drink holders are below. In-built concertina blinds on the windscreen and side windows, heated and electric adjustable side mirrors for great viewing while driving. The windscreen is heated, and automatic rain-sensing wipers are pretty cool.

To the left of entry we have a 24˝ Smart TV installed on the wall, and behind is the tower 137L fridge with a freezer box inside. Opposite this space is the compact L-shaped kitchen bench, with a Thetford combo oven/grill on the left, a utility drawer above it and the two-burner gas hob in the bench above. On the bench return is the round stainless sink with quality sink tap that is high enough for a good-sized pot to fit below, so a good-sized space for washing up. Storage below the sink area, and above overhead lockers. The electric control unit for the ceiling bed is also on the kitchen unit. Although it's a compact kitchen, the depth of the bench offers more food preparation space than you might think.

When operating the hidden ceiling bed you need to make a couple of adjustments by opening the false cupboard for the unit to come down far enough. An access ladder stores on top of the bed, which can be left made up with sheets and duvet, no pillows though. Curtains maintain a feeling of privacy around the interior bed area when in use.

LED Light Moments lighting system in the interior of the unit offers mood, direct and dimmable light options throughout, including the bathroom and shower area.

Mid-ship, behind the kitchen you step up to the rear space, with toilet en suite to the left and shower on the right. A door closes off the en suite itself, or comes back to close off the kitchen space from the rear space for more privacy and space. The toilet is a 12V electric flush pedestal cassette model. A generous vanity bench space with inset sink bowl will

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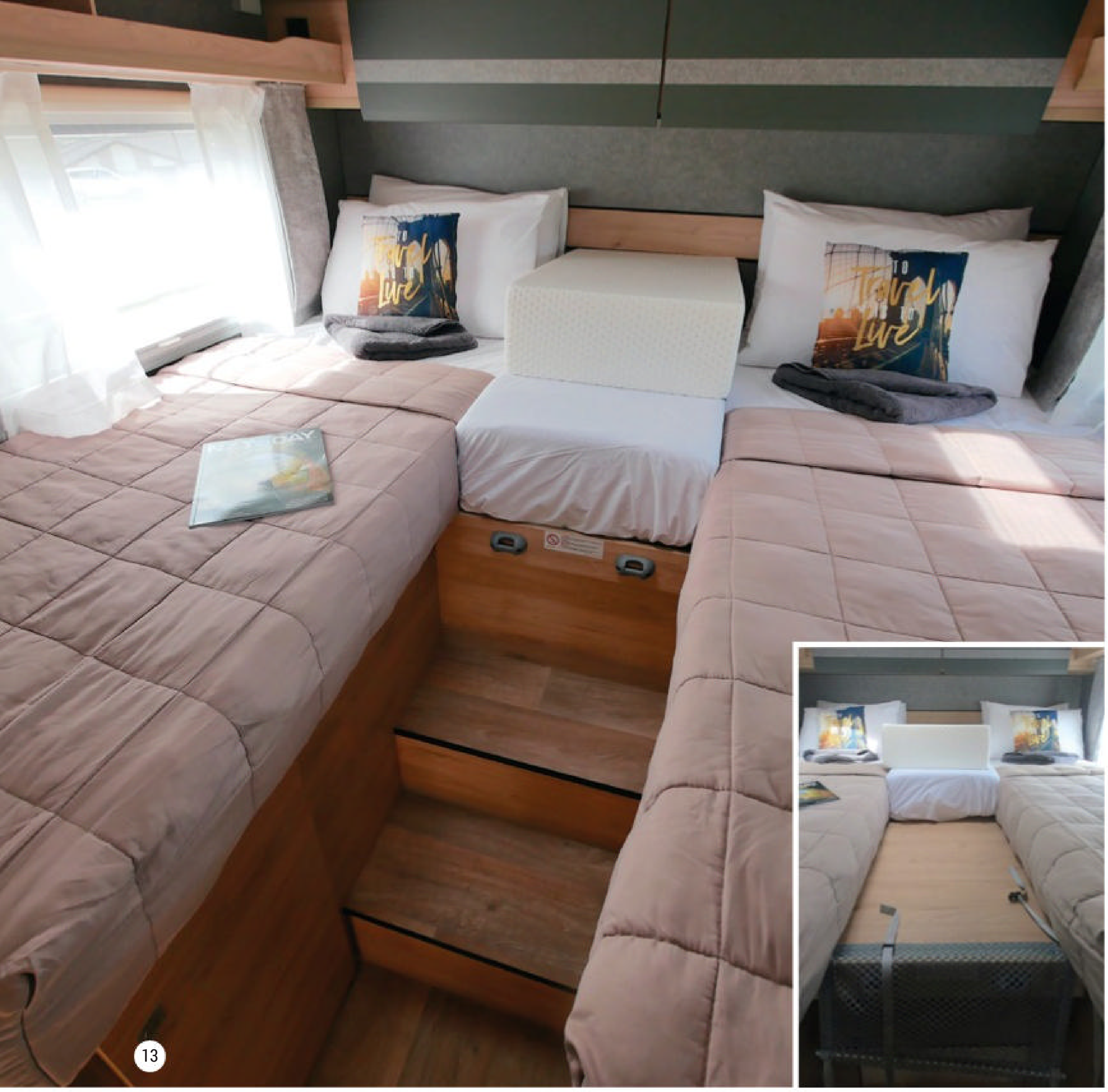
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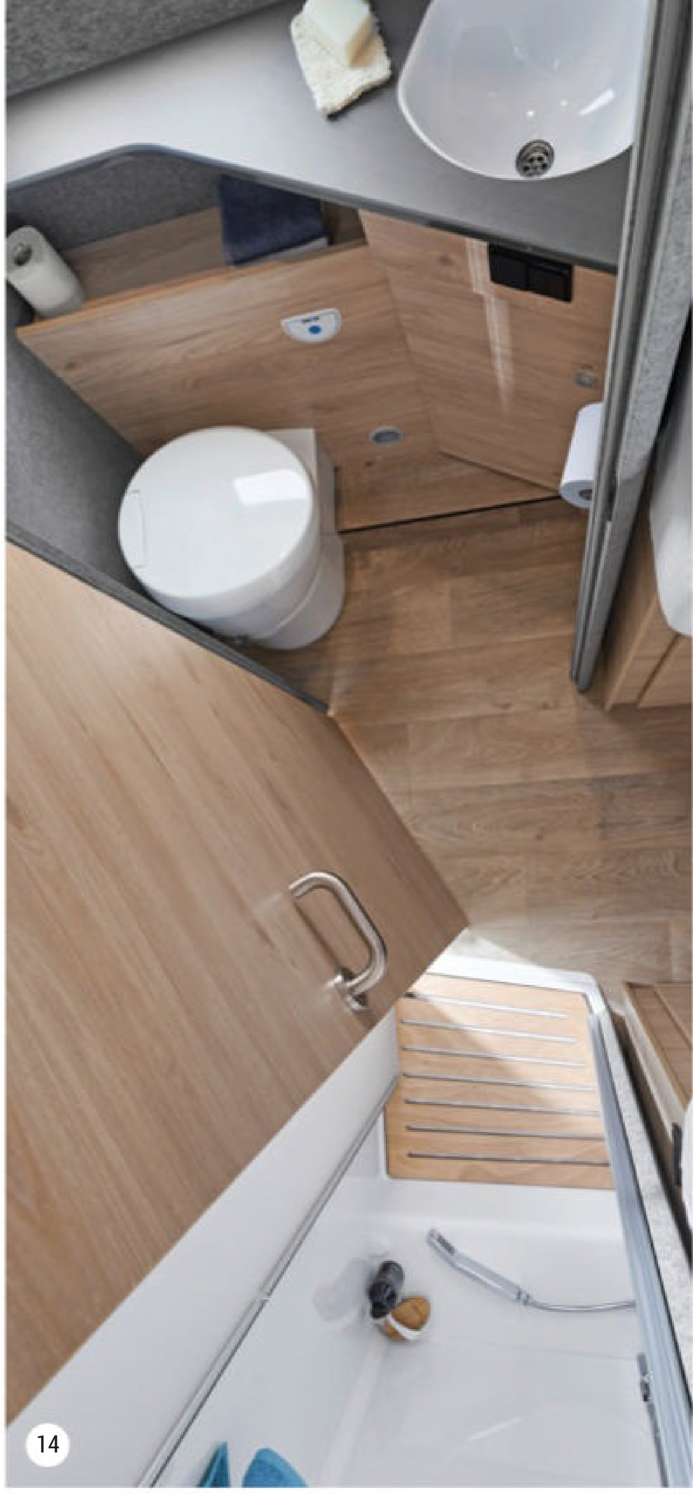
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please many. Storage shelf and cupboards. The full-height shower opposite has acrylic doors, seat-shelf, adjustable shower head, roof vent and lighting overhead.

Step through to the rear bedroom space, laid out to offer two single beds with a comfort joiner in top, or pull out the middle extension and use the extra mattress insert to make a large king bed, whichever suits your needs. Steps up for entry to the single beds, or a ladder for the big bed – they have thought of every option in here as well. Under-bed wardrobes, overhead lockers and open storage options, big windows for airflow and fabulous views make this a bedroom with options.

An easy drive around Pōkeno to get the feel of the new Ford was a pleasure for the Rock. If I could have told him at the time about all the 'Assist' features in the chassis I think he would have been in shock, with things like wind stabilisation, curve control and lane-keeping alert to name just a few to go with the cruise control, rain-sensing wipers and heated windscreen. Heaven forbid if he had played with the voice-activated Ford SYNC 3 entertainment system.

It will be interesting to see what other models arrive over the next couple of years on the Ford Transit chassis. It won't be long before the latest in electric RVs hit our shores either, with 380km-range models now available. RV

4-5. The ergonomic front cab seats swivel for seating in the dining space, integrated headrests, padded arm rests and inclinable for comfort. There are two seat belts in the forward-facing seats, and a side lounge under the window with a heating vent below. The table is fully adjustable, overhead storage lockers, and LED lighting **6.** Everything you might need at your fingertips, as well as voice control to the media unit, rear camera viewing as well – impressive cab unit **7-8.** The hidden ceiling bed, push the button for the electric bed to drop down over the dining area, a ladder for access stores on top of the bed, 2000mm x 1400mm with privacy curtains **9.** Kitchen area, fridge and freezer tower to the right, sink, gas hob, gas oven with grill to the left, dining forward, overhead ceiling bed above this space, front cab seats swivel to the living space **10.** Thetford Duplex under-bench gas oven with grill, utility drawer above **11.** Three-way auto 137L tower fridge with 15L freezer box inside **12.** Under-sink cupboard with waste bin, electric ceiling bed control here as well **13.** Two singles are generous sizes at 2150mm long x 800mm wide with built-in steps for entry, or expand to a large bed space by sliding the tray out and using the mattress extension for a bed 2100 x1900mm in size with a ladder for easy climb up. Seven-zone cold foam mattresses made of climate-regulating material and ergonomic wooden slatted frames for comfort **14.** From the rear bedroom looking down on the shower to the left, bathroom on the right, the door closes to the front if required or closes off the bathroom space from the bedroom

TECH SPECS

Dethleffs Just Go Ford 4-berth from $190,000

- Ford Transit Euro VIE 2L 130hp TDCI Ford EcoBlue diesel engine, 6-speed auto transmission

Dimensions

- Length 7360mm, width 2330mm, height 2990mm, internal height 2130mm
- GVM 4100kg, 1050kg payload, 2000kg tow rated, 1759mm rear axle width
- Habitation door 700mm wide
- Storage locker 950mm wide x 1150mm high
- Rear beds – two singles 2150mm x 800mm or large king 2100mm x 1900mm
- Ceiling electric bed 1400mm long x 2000mm wide
- Large opening skylight in the cab hood 700mm x 500mm
- Awning wind-out 4000mm
- On bench, two gas burners, under-bench Thetford combined oven/grill
- Heating Combi 6E gas/electric
- Tower 3-way auto 137L fridge with internal 15L freezer box
- Fitted, insulated fresh-water tank 115L, grey water 95L, hot water 20L
- Leisure battery 2 x 95Ah AGM batteries, on-board control panel, LED direct and ambient lighting
- Number of sockets 1x 12V, 8x 230V, 4x USB

FORD JOINS ERWIN HYMER GROUP

The Ford Transit Custom Series will sit alongside the Fiat Ducato chassis the company has predominantly used since 1983. The addition of Ford to their existing fleet brands such as Fiat Ducato, Mercedes, and Iveco aims to ensure a secure and stable flow of RVs out of the various EHG manufacturing plants around Europe and the UK.

The change is all part of an agreement signed on January 11, 2022, between Ford, Werke GmbH in Cologne, and Erwin Hymer Group (EHG), confirming the delivery of Ford Transit and Ford Transit Custom series skeletal cab chassis to EHG for manufacturing recreational vehicles (campervans and pop-tops), and completed motorhomes. The agreement with Ford includes working together on meeting emissions legislation, electrification, digitisation, connectivity, and the integration of driver assistance systems.

For EHG, the Ford Transit Custom Series with their compact size and versatility around town for parking is perfect for those looking for a compact RV and a daily driver. The range of chassis weights from 3500kg, 4100kg up to 4700kg combined with FWD, RWD and all-wheel drive options will please the commercial and recreation market manufacturers; single and dual rear wheel, and single and double cab seating options give a lot of scope in the future for underpinning a range of campervan and motorhome models.

To really understand the attraction of the Ford Transit we have to look a bit further back to appreciate the change that has occurred in design and weight. In 2018 the launch of the Ford Transit skeletal chassis in the UK and European markets, offered a special low-height chassis – 100mm lower than standard at the time – which gave carriers a lower loading point to the vehicle for commercial deliveries, and the 200kg extra payload capacity by not having a cab wall but leaving it open to give direct walk-thru entry from the cab to the rear was an added bonus for carriers, and fantastic for motorhome manufacturers. Lower garage storage floor and access, double floors for services, wider interior space to work with, were just some of the advantages gained for RV designers. Add to this the strong, lightweight ladder frame chassis, 1759mm wide rear axle width, and the Ford Transit skeletal chassis ticks a lot of boxes.

Today in 2023, the new phase of technology is really coming through in these commercial cabs. Cruise control is always a bonus, but the Intelligent Adaptive Cruise Control also recognises when cars ahead slow down and adjusts speed accordingly. The ESC system uses side-wind stabilisation technology when it senses crosswinds and strong winds, helping the driver to stay in the lane, working with the Transit's Lane-Keeping Alert that vibrates the steering wheel if it senses you are veering out of your lane. Curve control will rapidly reduce engine torque and apply brakes to individual wheels to keep the vehicle under control if you take a corner or curve too fast. Auto start-stop, puts the vehicle in neutral when you come to a stop at traffic lights to save fuel and emissions. There is even a maintenance monitor that will tell you how your oil is doing, if you have water in your fuel, when to top up the AdBlue or brake-fluid reservoir, and the Ford Easy Fuel capless refuelling system safeguards you from filling up with the wrong fuel – should have checked that out when we looked at the vehicle.In the cab, the Ford SYNC 3 system with 8" touchscreen and acceptance of voice commands, puts all the latest and greatest technology right at your fingertips – or voice now. To help the driver out even more, the windshield wipers have auto rain sensor, and the windshield can be heated via the air-con unit, the headlights have a day/night and high-beam sensor assistant to go with the emergency braking assist feature to work with the lane assist. Honestly the 'assist features' are packed into these units.

The leap in technology for the Ford commercial market is great. Considering they only started using automatic transmissions in the Transits back in 2017, the design changes in 2018 and the leap in the electrification of the Ford Transit models for the 2023–24 market shows the brand is on the move. John Rawlings spoke of the launch of the new ETransit Custom Ford at the ISS Transportation Show in Hanover Germany in his column NZTRVL Vol 20, and here from Ford New Zealand there are PHEV options, and the new electric models are coming. The 2024 campervan models may see some interesting electric products come through from EU and UK manufacturers.

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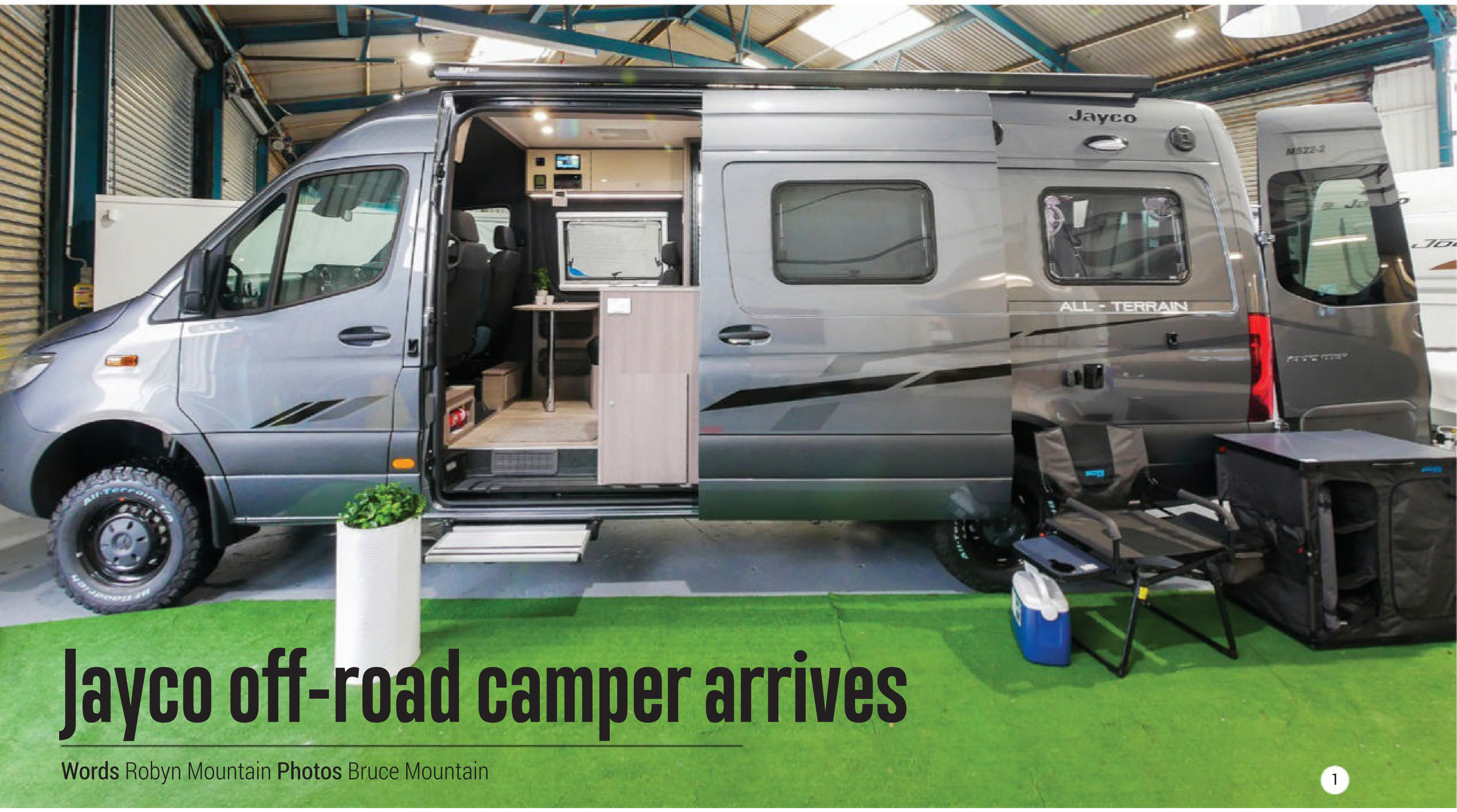

Jayco off-road camper arrives

Words Robyn Mountain **Photos** Bruce Mountain

1

It has been interesting watching the development and expansion of chassis bases for campers and motorhomes in the last five years, and seeing four-wheel-drive motorhomes and campers coming onto the market through mainstream manufacturers like Jayco in Australia, and others. The next big push in coming years will be electric cab chassis chassis, firstly in Europe and the UK. With travel ranges expanding every year we can expect to see EV campers from the big manufacturers from 2024. I don't see Australia pursuing the electric campers anytime soon though; it is hard to imagine having charging stations across the Outback, but here in New Zealand it is definitely on the cards.

As the latest 2022 Jayco All Terrain campervan on the Mercedes-Benz all-wheel-drive cab had arrived at Jayco Auckland, the Rock and I headed along to see Mitchell O'Donnell in sales for a personal tour. Unfortunately, this was on the day of the January floods in Auckland, so actually driving the vehicle was a no-go, but with the new owner due to pick up their new campervan soon we risked the weather and checked the vehicle out at the Great South Road, Penrose showroom premises of Jayco Auckland. The business relocated to this site from East Tāmaki in 2020, pulling together the previously fragmented sales, servicing, and presales sites into one central area with a large, impressive indoor showroom and service centre. There were plenty of Jayco models of all types on display in the large showroom, but Mitchell led us out the back to the big service area where the Jayco All Terrain campervan was set up waiting for us. It had arrived just a few days earlier so the team had worked hard to get it ready.

Classed as a campervan because the original vehicle body is used – as opposed to a skeleton cab chassis having a body built on it, which we then call a motorhome – this long-wheel-base model is 6970mm long, 2120mm wide (with the awning), and being the hi-top roof version, its exterior height is 3000mm (including the air-con unit and Wingard 4G Wi-Fi box) providing 1900mm of interior head room. Under the hood of this 2022 model is a honking big 3L V6 engine with the 9G-TRONIC PLUS transmission, though models from 2023 onwards will have the latest OM435 2.2L engine that is more economical and produces more horsepower than the current engine. The body construction is steel. Windows have been cut out on each side of the vehicle for double-glazed acrylic, push-out opening units to be installed, and a hatch for the toilet cassette and a single roof vent have been cut into the body work. The habitation entry door is the standard slider that has electric opening feature as standard along with a wide 700mm electric step for entry to the living space.

Mercedes have utilised the technical knowledge from their luxury car brands in these commercial cab chassis, with a range of driver 'Assist' safety technology as standard features: active brake, active lane keeping,

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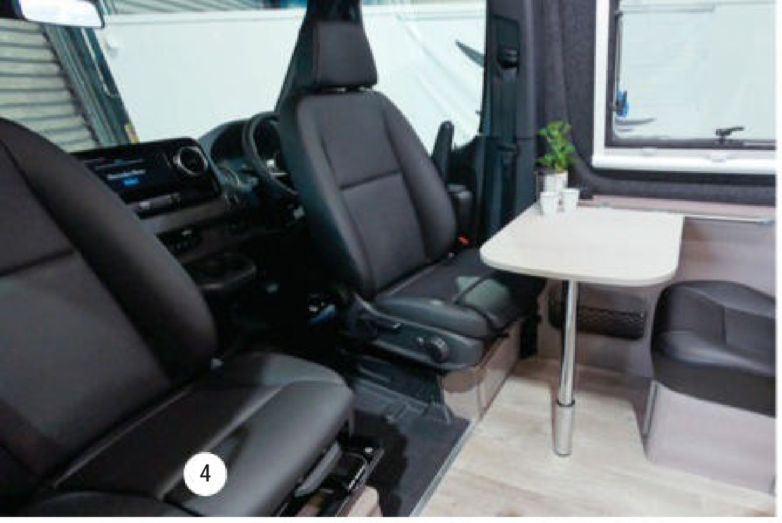
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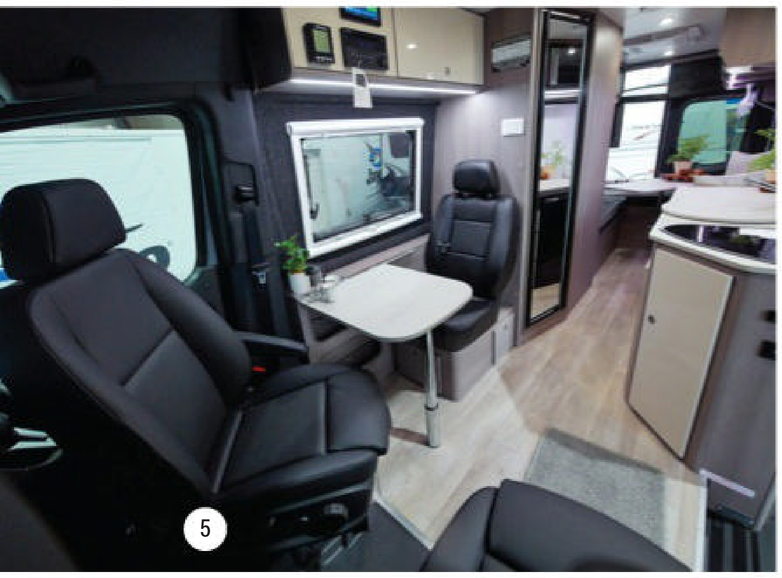
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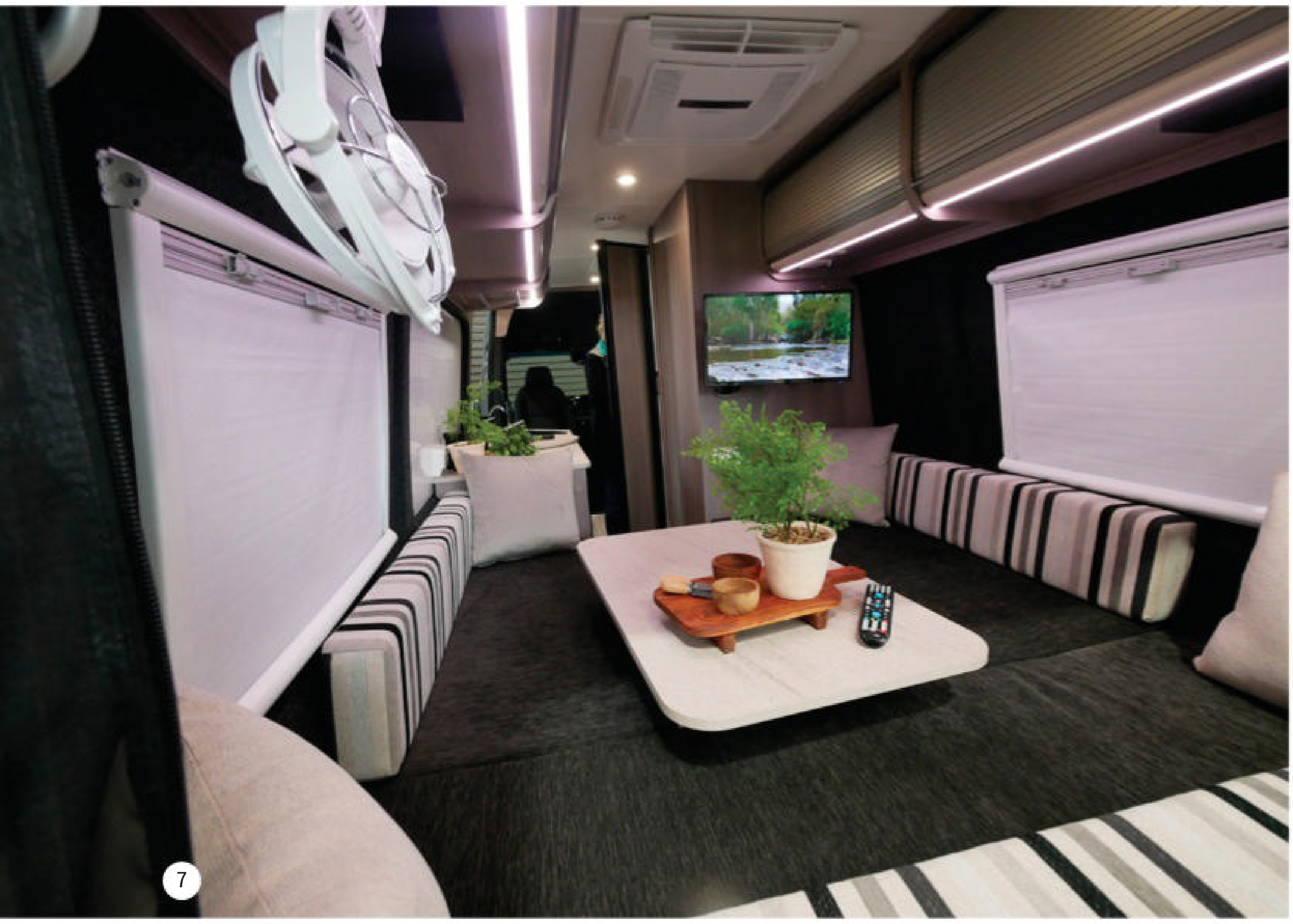
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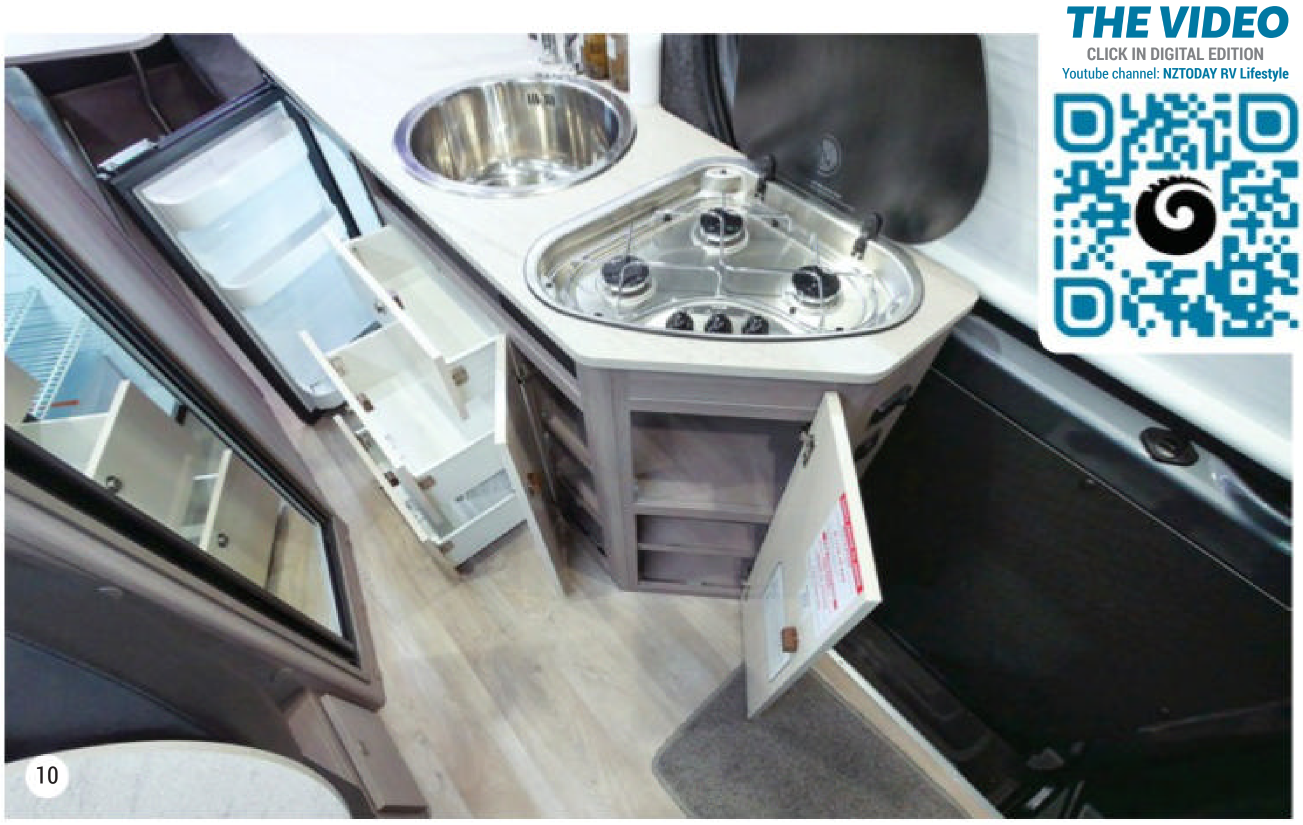
adaptive distance assist in cruise control, adaptive ESP, blind-spot assist, crosswind assist, cruise control, rain-sensing wipers, variable speed limiter, electronic hand brake, high-beam assist are all on board, almost a co-pilot suite of technology for the driver in these late-model chassis. An incorrect-fuel protection system is another feature.

The front cab seats are luxurious leather with adjustable armrests and as well as being heated, are multi-adjustable and swivel to the rear. The steering wheel is leather and features latest electronic steering technology that improves the driver's comfort and stabilises vehicle handling alongside all the 'Assist' features. The big 10.5˝ touch screen on the multimedia unit is big and full of functions for entertainment, 'phone, Bluetooth connectivity, GPS, rear camera, Android and iPhone and more.

We press the button behind the passenger door pillar and the sliding habitation door opens. The electric step comes out as well and we step onto the standard built-in step then up to the interior. Directly opposite is a small table with a forward-facing single seat-belted passenger seat (with child restraint fitting). The table is removeable and there are drawers under the front and side of the seat for storage items. The cab seats swivel to this dinette area. Above this space are an overhead locker and vehicle monitors, and the exterior wall has a large opening window with fly-screens and fitted blinds.

1. Wide electric step and electric door, both operated with the push of a button **2.** Cab seats are adjustable and have comfort arm rests. Mercedes steering wheel with driver controls **3.** Great mosquito net screen for the rear **4-5.** Stepping into the living space with front cab seats turned to the rear, there is a single seat-belted passenger seat behind the café dinette table **6.** Plenty of space in the rear lounge, with dining table that converts the space to a large king bed, or keep as two singles **7.** The rear doors open wide, spacious looking interior from this end, two Sirocco 12V fans and the air-conditioning unit in the roof **8.** 24" Smart TV, overhead locker storage and services **9.** Storage and gas bottle locker in the rear under-seat space

WATCH THE VIDEO
CLICK IN DIGITAL EDITION
Youtube channel: NZTODAY RV Lifestyle



Behind the single seat is the wall for the mid-ship bathroom on the driver's side of the vehicle. This has a Thetford 12V electric flush toilet and wet shower space with a compact corner sink. The shower head on flexible hose can be hand-held or fixed.

To the hard right of entry and opposite the bathroom area is the kitchen bench unit with a door on the end to access under-bench shelves. The bench has a stainless steel three-burner gas hob at the door end, and a round 450mm stainless sink with a fitted Laminex sink cover the same as the bench. A black sink tap and separate water filter tap look good, and the stretch of bench top to the end provides a generous food preparation space. Under the bench are cupboards with shelves, three generous-sized drawers on EziGlide runners, and next to them a 12V compressor Vitrifrigo 2-way 85L fridge-freezer. The splashback along the sink wall has a subway-tile finish, and overhead sits a microwave and storage locker.

The last two metres of the campervan are taken up with the Club lounge seating that offers two single beds, or conversion to a large queen bed size. Plenty to love in this space with the generously sized tinted windows both sides and two Sirocco 12V fans. This is the first campervan I have seen with a roll-down mosquito net that closes in the entire back space with the doors open – fantastic feature, though still no fitted blinds on the rear door windows.

Underneath the rear seating is storage space that includes the gas bottle. You can choose to have this as a full walk-through space instead, as part of your personal flat plan choice.

A 24˝ Smart TV is mounted on the back bathroom wall, facing to the rear on a swivel bracket. It connects to the Dometic Wi-Fi extender, and you can choose to install a satellite dish as well.

Plenty of power in this unit with 200W solar panels on the roof, a 120Ah lithium battery system with a BMPRO J-Hub tablet for easy monitoring, and even a Lippert tyre pressure monitor. Standard 86L freshwater and 110L grey water tanks, and (tucked away out of sight) diesel heating and a Nautilus gas continuous hot water system round out the living necessities in this campervan.

There is a lot of living comfort on offer here, and accessibility to our remote beaches and forests is well within this vehicle's capabilities. Mitchell is happy to have an off-road camper available for their customers – people often have to have something custom-built in this realm, so having a large manufacturer such as Jayco bringing out product as part of their range is great. RV

10. Cupboards with shelves, soft-close drawers, and a 85L 12V compressor fridge to the left
11. Three-burner gas hob with glass lid, stainless sink, water tap and water filter tap, long bench space for food prep
12. Sink cover offers more bench prep space, the splashback mimics subway-tile finish

TECH SPEC'S

Jayco All terrain 2-berth campervan this model $196,990

Chassis Mercedes Sprinter, rear-wheel drive, 2.2L 104kW 4-cylinder turbo-diesel with 7-speed auto transmission 16" steel wheels with 18-hole design, electronic steering

Dimensions/weight Length 6970mm, width 2120mm, exterior height 3000mm, interior height 1900mm, GVM 4100kg, tare 3340kg, payload 760kg, roof hatch in living area 390 x 390, Beds – 2 x single option 1900mm x 600mm wide, Converted rear king size 1900mm x 1760mm wide

- 360-degree reversing camera
- 4-metre box awning
- 1 x gas bottle
- Autoterm diesel heater with single outlet
- Furrion 3300 stereo sound system including CD/USB/Bluetooth, with external speakers as well
- Vitrifrigo 2-way 85L fridge/freezer
- Fresh water 86L, grey water 110L
- Thetford 3-burner gas hob cooker
- Nautilus gas continuous hot water service
- Dometic Harrier Lite air conditioner
- 24˝ Smart LED TV
- Microwave
- Wingard 4G Wi-Fi
- J35D 12V power system and DC/DC Charger, BMPRO J-Hub tablet, 200W solar, 120Ah lithium battery

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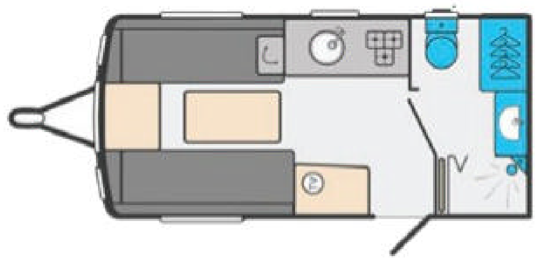
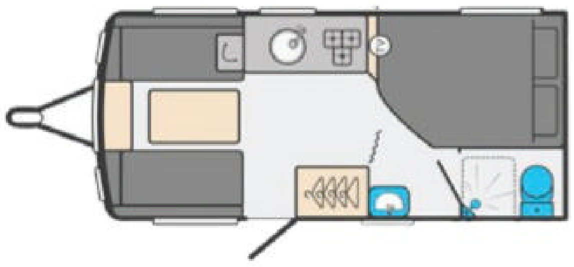
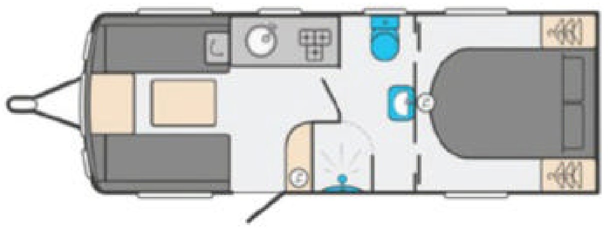


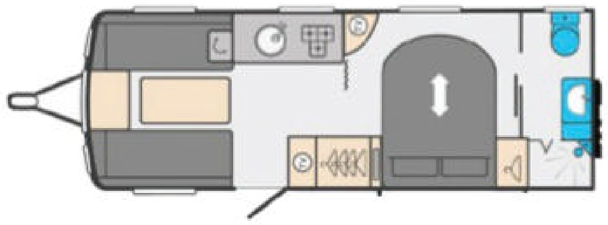
Swift Utopia 480 (Alpine 2)
$64,990



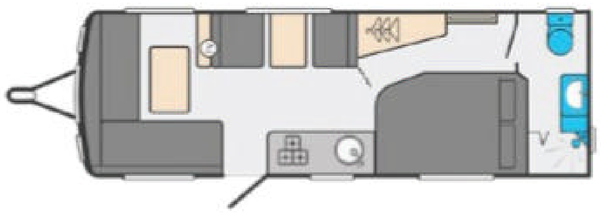
Swift Utopia 510 (Alpine 4)
$66,990



Swift Utopia 560 (Major 4EB)
$72,990



Swift Utopia 580 (Major 4SB)
$64,990



Swift Utopia 630 (Quattro EW)
$80,990

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Vern and Julie, proud owners of Nelson Caravans

Nelson Caravans are currently one of the largest stockists of new Swift Caravans in New Zealand. We are an authorised, factory-backed Swift dealer and therefore able to offer the factory warranty and access to fully genuine Swift parts. Because we are dedicated to primarily new Swift caravans we are able to offer and display the majority of the models that Swift manufacture.

Vern, Julie and the staff are proud of their customer dedication and service achieving New Zealand's #1 rated small dealership Buyer Score award for 2022. The awards recognise dealerships and salespeople with consistently great reviews from the people who matter most – the buyers.

2023 is an exciting time for us as we are starting to land the first of the new 2023 fresh-look Swift caravan models.

Embracing both a new look and a new layout (being the Basecamp 3), Basecamp sees a significant overhaul this year. The iconic orange that has been part of Basecamp since its launch has been shaken up with a bright and bold blue exterior giving it a welcome new look. The theme continues inside with a new fresh Ocean fabric scheme.

Its rugged look and practical features are deepened this year with larger diamond-cut alloy wheels and chunky exterior detailing to the front and rear, and new shock absorbers have been added to improve towing stability.

Focusing on value for money and diversity, Sprite has a layout for every type of family. Completely refreshed both inside and out for 2023, it's still packed with all the essentials to maintain its perennial popularity and provide exceptional specification and style, ready for endless fun and relaxing getaways.

Fitted with a brand-new soft furnishing scheme this year, Bluemoon offers a mixture of grey tones and soft blues for a light and airy interior. With a specification that exceeds entry-level expectations, Sprite is also fitted with hardwearing fixtures to handle whatever family life presents.

A full makeover takes Challenger to a whole new level and makes it an irresistible choice for 2023. Its new on-trend lighter interior and a host of external upgrades makes Challenger an even better value-for-money choice.

The Challenger has a NEW overall body width of 2.28m/7´6˝ (was 7´4˝). Also NEW for this year is the Challenger SE boasting even more exclusive features in an already feature-packed caravan.

Delivering all the loved Challenger features, the newly renamed 8-ft wide Challenger Grande range brings valuable space, making it an ideal family caravan. Plus with a full redesign for 2023 and a new six-berth layout arriving in the latter part of the season, Challenger Grande really is an enticing choice. This also includes an SE in its range.

At the top end of the Swift Caravan line-up is the Elegance Grande. With three favourable layouts to choose from, this 8-feet wide, twin-axle trailblazer embraces a full remodel amplifying its refined status for 2023.

To ensure your touring is as comfortable as it is luxurious, no specification has been overlooked when it comes to the 2023 Elegance Grande. Many new features including wireless charging, new L-shape kitchen, EW upgraded boutique style dedicated washroom and an increased MTPLM of 2250kg!

Exclusive to Nelson Caravans for 2023, after negotiating with Swift UK, we are very excited to be able to offer our own dealer special – the Swift Utopia. This offers the following additional features over and above the Sprite.

Nelson Caravans are also proud to represent the 'Camec' brand of accessories. Most Camec accessories are represented on site, but if we don't have it we will get it from our suppliers. Please come in and meet us and visit our store.

Further to our Camec accessories, we are also the New Zealand agent for the premium 'Isabella' awnings from Denmark. Isabella uses only the best materials, made by the world's leading suppliers. These can be viewed on our website.

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Challenger
Challenger

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Elegance
Elegance

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1955 Sprite 14 'Bluebelle'- Rare Retro Classic

Mint condition with all necessary upgrades done Includes shower modification and installation, otherwise original
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1977 Trailer Homes Elcanto

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$22,500. **Ph:** 027 476 9962

2010 TrailLite Oakura & Suzuki Vitara

A Class 2 license required, 4 berths, front lounge
Rear island queen, separate shower, 32' TV
Towing A-frame, length 8M, AMT 6 speed tiptronic
$235,000. **Ph:** 022 107 4151

2014 Kea River Rest

6 berth fixed bed model, popular layout
Dbl bed at rear, café-style dinette, luton bed
Solar panel, awning, 7.25 metres
$89,990 **Ph:** 07 575 0170 Country RV

2020 Leisureline Nomad

Spacious 2 berth, big fridge, heating, TV, satellite, separate shower and toilet, Light to tow, easy to park and roomy enough inside to eat, sleep and play! $84,990 **Ph:** 07 575 0170 Country RV

2016 Jayco Silverline 24-75-2

4 berths front lounge island bed separate shower
New upgraded bed caravan mover
5x 150w solar panels full rear bathroom
$105,000. **Ph:** 021 721 305

2012 Volkswagen Crafter 6

Awning, bed over cab, rear u-shaped lounge
6 berths, 240,652km, good storage
Full width storage locker at rear
$89,990. **Ph:** 021 909 932 Levin RV

1978 Retro Pioneer

Owned for 30 yr's always garaged in great condition
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Comes nearly all setup ready to go
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1972 Concord Shadow

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2008 Swift Charisma 555

4 berth French bed north/south 2nd battery
160w solar panel full awning rear bathroom
Lounge converts to double bed
$43,995. **Ph:** 07 307 1000
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2002 Mercedes Benz OF 8000

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$250,000. **Ph:** 021 0221 0984

1991 Toyota Liteace Camper

175,000kms 150 solar panel
Wind out awning table converts to bed
Shower & toilet motor reconditioned Aug 2020
$28,600 ono **Ph:** 021 02380070

2017 Jayco Iveco Optimum

2 berth Island bed slide-outs 3x solar panels
Separate shower & toilet electric awning
BBQ self-levellers external shower
$265,000 **Ph:** 027 311 4290

2018 Swift Vogue 635EB

4 berth Retractable island bed (east/west)
Lounge converts to double bed Centre bathroom with separate shower
$69,995. **Ph:** 07 307 1000
Gateway Caravans

2020 Bailey Phoenix 640

4 berth Rear bedroom with island bed n/s
Lounge converts to double bed Front cover
175w Solar panel with MPPT controller
$72,995. **Ph:** 07 307 1000
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2020 Carthago Malibu T 430 LE

2 berths twin single (make king) front lounge
18,320km 6 speed manual sunroof
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2016 Niesmann + Bischoff Arto 88F

Awning front lounge island bed separate shower
220W solar panel 22" TV auto dish
4 berths 41,139KM leather seats
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Zion Motorhomes

2017 LDV Kea Breeze

4 berth with 4 seatbelts. Features incl manual drop down dbl bed, spacious rear lounge (converts to dbl) with wrap-around panoramic views, Good storage both inside/out.
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2023 Leisureline Nomad 482

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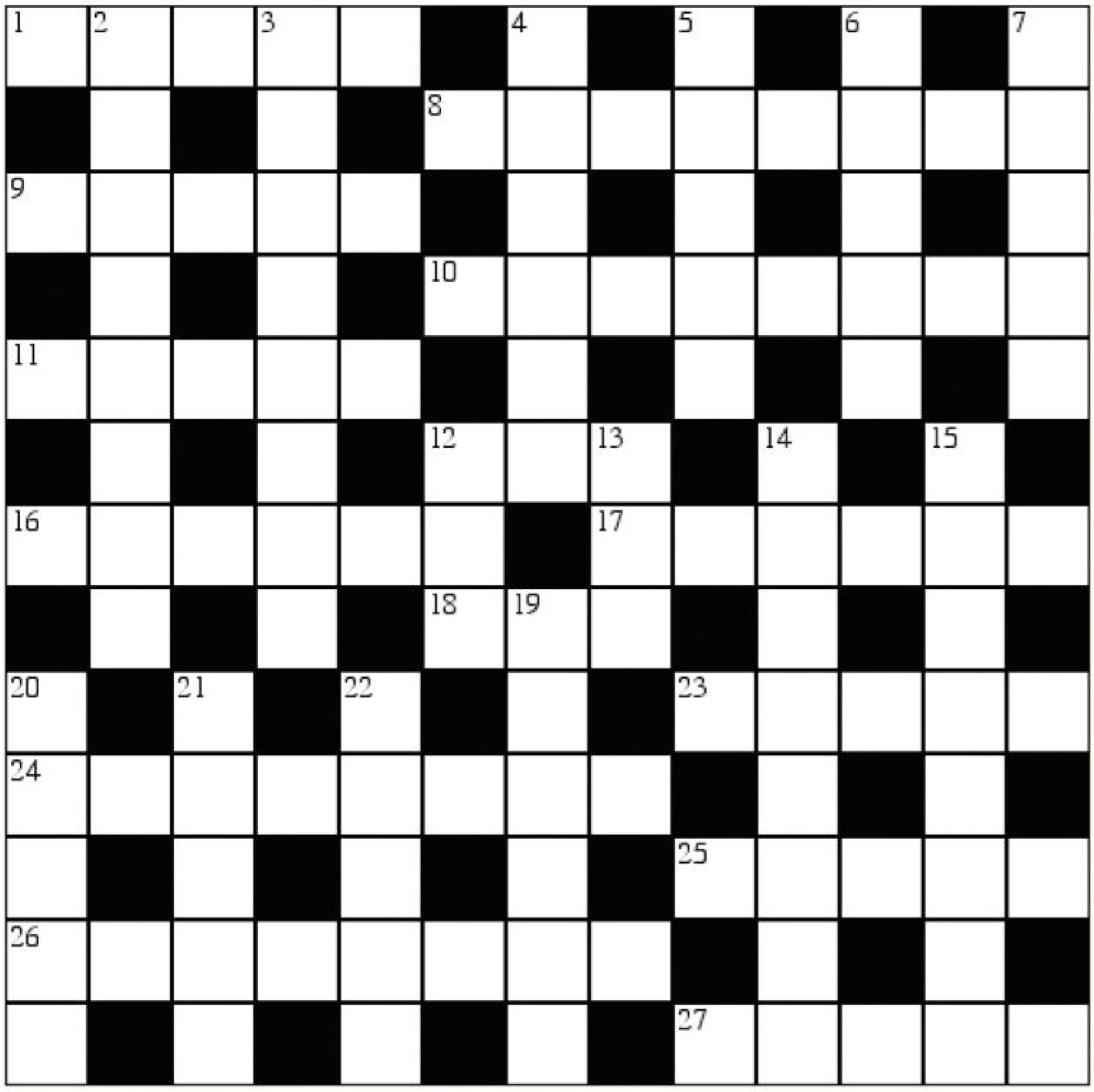
GAME ZONE

Crossword *by David Cass*



Clues across: 1. World's largest living creature, whose hunting through the nineteenth century was a major NZ industry (5) **8.** Westland township at one time regarded as NZ's 'Capital of the Goldfields' and now a good base to stay for West Coast exploration (8) **9.** NZ's commonest lizard species (5) **10.** Historic site in the Bay of Islands, where NZ's founding Treaty document was signed - a tourist must-see (8) **11.** Landslide of volcanic debris mixed with water, often triggered by heavy rainfall (5) **12.** Descriptor term for a load-bearing but undriven axle, usually behind the drive axle, often fitted to heavily laden RVs (3) **16.** Village just south of Stratford in Taranaki - the Maori word for swamp (6) **17.** Major holiday centre for the Bay of Islands with a lovely beach and wide variety of holiday accommodation (6) **18.** Braking aid fitted to some modern RVs which helps prevent wheel lock-up (1,1,1) **23.** NZ's highest ski-field, north-east of Ohakune (5) **24.** Once called Eweburn, this Central Otago township has a variety of pleasing art deco style buildings (8) **25.** Maori earth oven, prepared by building a big fire in a pit to heat stones, over which the food is then cooked on covered-over leaf beds (5) **26.** Several varieties of this object in your RV - some in the engine, plus another for holding gas (8) **27.** North Canterbury farming township and trout and salmon river (5)

Clues down: 2. NZ's fourth largest harbour (in area) and a very pleasant touring area, next stop on your northward tour after the Waipoua kauri forest (8) **3.** Czech-born artist (1839-1926) primarily known for his Maori portraits (8) **4.** One of NZ's forest giants, a tree in many ways more useful than the celebrated Kauri; its wood is durable and it was the Maori's most valuable timber (6) **5.** The stretch of water east of the Coromandel is known as the ---- of Thames (5) **6.** 'The ----' is a successful 1993 NZ film, for which some filming was done in Karekare (5) **7.** Peninsula and tourist town at the north end of Hawkes Bay (5) **12.** These days it's a 'cuppa' but used to be 'a billy of ---' (3) **13.** Space satellite-based global location and time information system - has it replaced atlas and maps in your RV? (1,1,1) **14.** Forest Park and mountain range between Wellington and the Wairarapa - sometimes difficult road travelling here with strong winds that can affect RV stability (8) **15.** Forest Park, mountain and township, some 30km south of Hamilton - a low-key but interesting tourist area (8) **19.** West Coast river, 169km long, with much spectacular gorge scenery which can be appreciated as you travel one of NZ's finest road trips on SH 6 and 63 through the area (6) **20.** NZ's National Wildlife Centre is located on the slopes of Mount ----, about 30km north of Masterton on SH2; it's a tourist must-visit, in my book at least! (5) **21.** Great NZ middle-distance runner, triple Olympic champion and world record-holder over his specialist distances (5) **22.** A fine statue of Scottish poet Robbie ---- stands in Dunedin's Octagon (5)

Game answers Vol 20

Q	W	A	K	A	■	V	■	K	■	M	■	P
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Note pad

Word Search

M	T	E	N	N	A	G	F	W	O	A	N	L	B	U	I
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M	Y	A	K	L	A	I	P	R	A	Y	P	T	S	A	F
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T	K	B	U	I	L	R	E	W	S	R	C	I	R	O	T
N	U	G	A	U	U	E	G	W	E	N	B	I	S	K	C
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W	Q	E	W	N	A	M	E	T	R	E	I	R	R	A	H
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F	C	Y	K	P	S	A	Y	Q	W	P	R	P	A	E	L

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The word search grid contains 25 words from the list of words. The placing may be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal, and running forwards or backwards. One of the words in the word list is not present in the grid - your challenge is not only to find the words that are present but to identify the one that isn't! The solution will be given in our next issue.

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kakapo
weka
takahe
pukeko
piopio
fantail
godwit
morepork
dotterel
albatross
penguin
petrel
kereru
tui
kaka
titi
pipit
quail
harrier
seagull
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Dogs welcome in Martinborough

Woof-woof readers!

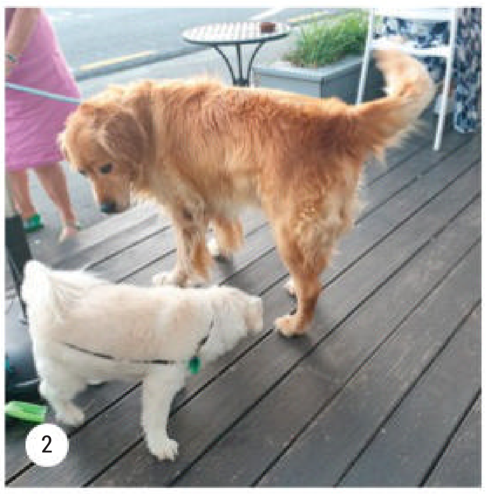
It feels like a long time since I had to arf-arf out a column for you guys. There hasn't been a whole lot going on for me in some woof-woof ways.

I got left at home for a week while mama and papa went on a plane to Christchurch. I could have gone but I whined and woofed 'no' when they talked about it, so Uncle Pete and Shakira came to stay with me. Mama said I would be stressed at their house – she's right, so thanks mama. We had a great time. Pete made me my own special food with rice, veggies and chicken, and I got two walkies a day at least. It was yip-yip yippee great. I miss them, especially with mama so busy working all the time, and would still love two walkies a day.

Another weekend we drove up to Auckland in the motorhome one day and drove back the next day, stopping in at McLaren Falls before going straight back to Martinborough. Grrr arf-arf, you could have got Pete in I said – but then I wouldn't have seen Mac and played with my mate Finn in the sandpit so, woof-woof okay it worked out, I guess.

Other than that we have been at home in Martinborough mainly – it is pretty yip-yip yappy great to be back in a place with so many doggie mates. Some places we visit in the motorhome don't let me get out to walk around. That is super grrrr growly on a long trip coz we all need a break, but mama and

1. I was allowed in the sandpit with my mate Finn this time, McLaren Falls **2.** This guy is a local at Cool Change, see why I stay outside **3.** One day at home these guys on bikes came past about 20 times. I wanted papa to get the buddy rider out and join them but he said no **4.** Tummy tickle time on daddy's new lawn – he poisoned the old one by mistake **5.** Yoko is a friend who lives a few doors down. She turns up on the deck every day for a visit when I am home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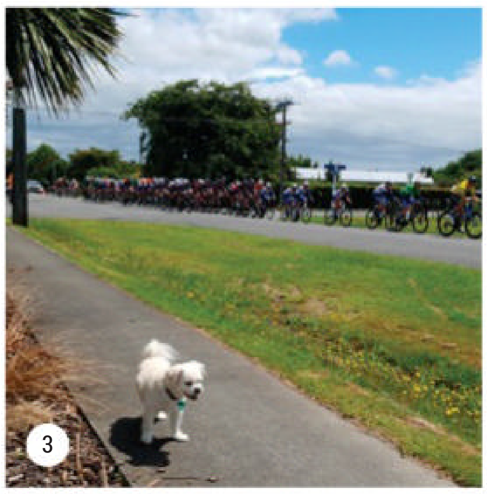
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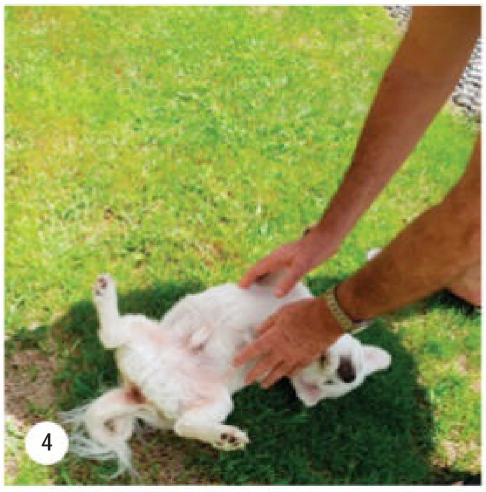
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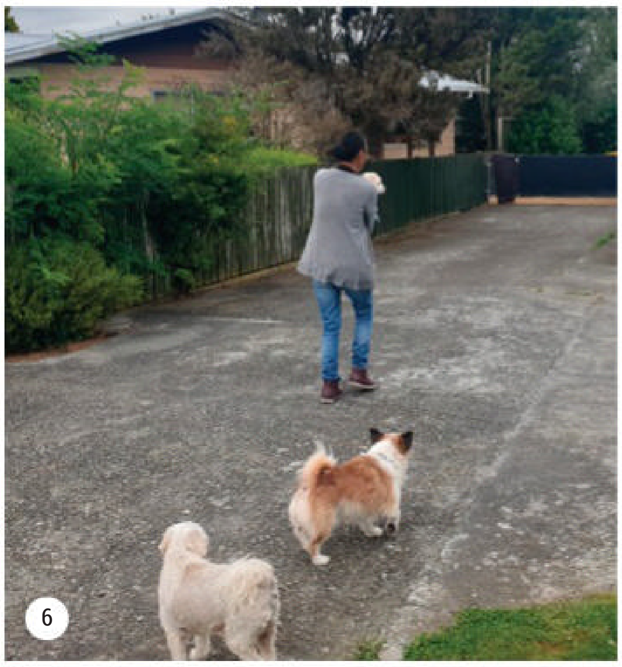

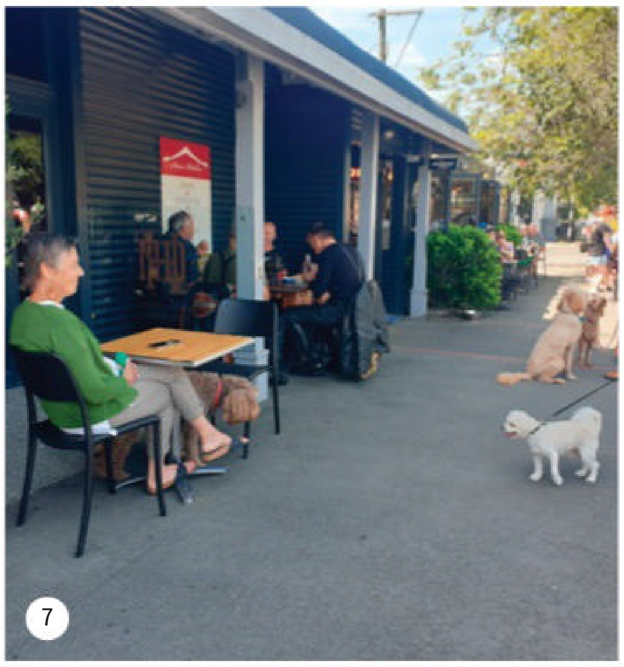

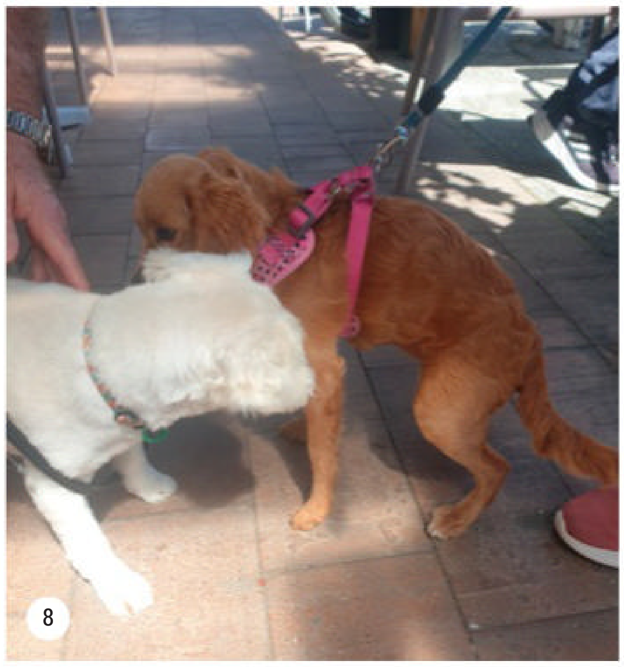

papa don't usually stop long in those places.

Most of the places in Marty (as mama calls it) let us pets come inside; in fact when we go walkies up town I make sure we always call into Mitre 10 to see the team there. I know from experience that a little tail wag and smile gets me a couple of treats from out of the jar straightaway, doesn't matter which human is behind it. All the cafés have doggy water bowls and welcome our company. One of the bars even lets us real locals sit inside – though with some of the bigger guys around usually I prefer the deck out the front, watching for any passing friends to woof out to and get a sniff session on.

Finally on the weekend we went out for a play at Lake Ferry beach, where the lake water meets the ocean mama tells me. We often go there during the year, but not for a few months, so it was good to get some exercise and sniff around to see who's been there. When we stopped at the historic Lake Ferry hotel, there was a cute little pup yipping away under a table out the back, so I went over for a quick meet up, sniff and a wee and after giving the little whipper-snapper some wise old dog advice we went to a new table on the deck. Mama and papa had some yummy fish (mama shared hers) and chips (yucky for me – I don't eat hot chips), shared chicken nibbles (yip-yip yummy), and we all had a drink and enjoyed the water view. Well mama and papa did, I enjoyed the birds flying about more than the view.

Time for a haircut with Lola. I was panting on the bathroom floor too much, and mama said I must need a trim. A frisky big doggie mate at Lola's was a bit much but we got it sorted eventually, well I was handed over and that was it, is more to the yap-yap point.

We have been watching some sad things on TV. I saw doggies all covered in mud, some on top of house roofs with dirty water all around, lots of sad doggy mates who got caught in the rain and water, it looked super scary. Mama showed me when some doggies were being looked after at a special place. They got washed and there was a vet who checked them to make sure they were okay, and most importantly there was food and clean water. I wondered how they would find their mama and papa's from there, but mama showed and told me how the humans used words on the Facebook (like my Facebook page) and posters and TV media people to spread the word and let them know. I was so woof-woof happy about that, and mama said there were lots of other pets, cats, horses, ponies, pigs, birds and even goldfish being saved and helped. Mama read out lots of people's posts showing big pallets of dried food being sent to them, and told me the SPCA was helping a lot, and another place from near Wellington that rescues animals, HUHA, were up there helping them. The SPCA and other people have been finding and looking after pets in Auckland, the Coromandel, Northland and Hawkes Bay where they also got lots of rain, and animals and humans got separated. We should give them some money coz they sound like really good people, arf-arf woof-woof.

Take care my friends, I won't be at the Covi Supershow in March, I'm not allowed there, but we might see you on the road. 🐾

6. Getting dropped off at Lola's for a haircut, this girl is a big frisky **7.** Martinborough is very dog friendly. We meet mates at the Neighbourhood Café around the square **8.** Lots of puppies around the place – I feel like the old man around town nowadays. This is five-month-old Sadie at Tonic Bistro Martinborough **9.** Another puppy to meet and pass on advice to at Lake Ferry Hotel

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